

# THE SATURDAY REVIEW



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## NOTES OF THE WEEK

THE Foreign Office and the Quai d'Orsay seem now to be almost agreed upon the measure of Germany's failure to disarm and, consequently, upon the seriousness of the obstacles that impede the evacuation of Cologne. This news, though belated, is welcome, since to a very great extent the future peace of Europe depends upon Germany's entry into the League of Nations, and this entry would never occur while the mass of the German people saw no prospect of the speedy evacuation of the Cologne bridgehead. We have now to hope that the ultimate decision as to when Germany has fulfilled the disarmament conditions will be made by the Governments themselves, who can take political factors into consideration, and not by the Control Commission, which could judge only from the technical standpoint. A factory which has not yet been converted for peace pur-

poses may be a danger, but it is far less dangerous than would be the passage of another year without Germany as a member of the League.

## MOSCOW AND BERLIN

The Cologne affair has not been the only cause of Germany's reluctance to take her seat at the League Council table. Russia has frowned upon every German advance towards Geneva and, despite constant bickerings, Berlin and Moscow hesitate to break off the *liaison* which began in the sunny gardens of Rapallo during the Genoa Conference. The policy of the Rapallo Treaty has failed, but neither party likes to say so. President Hindenburg, however, may help. His election, we read, has created "amazement" in Russia and the German Communist Party will not fail to do everything in its power to widen the fissures in the Treaty's structure—fissures which have become very marked since Herr von Maltzan, who negotiated the Treaty on behalf of Germany, gave up his post as Permanent Under-Secretary in the

Everything's right—  
if it's a

# Remington TYPEWRITER

First in 1873—  
First to-day!

German Foreign Office to become Ambassador in Washington. His successor in Berlin, Herr von Schubert, realizes how much it would be to Germany's advantage to be represented in Geneva, and although the Foreign Minister himself is notoriously hostile to the League, Russia will have an increasingly difficult task to prevent Germany from applying for League membership next September.

#### A WESTERN PACT

France rather naturally does not feel that the acceptance by Germany of the League of Nations Covenant would be in itself a sufficient guarantee of security unless the obligations of the Covenant were to be amplified and emphasized in a manner unacceptable to British public opinion. Hence the necessity for a special Western Pact, such as Mr. Chamberlain outlined in his famous speech of March 24. Some slight further delay may not add to the difficulties of drawing up a Western Pact, but it does undoubtedly complicate the security issue as a whole, since it adds to the uneasiness of Eastern European States, whose policy is not always far-sighted even when they feel relatively secure. Mr. Chamberlain will be in Geneva on June 8 to attend the session of the League Council, and we have reason to believe that he will take this opportunity to set out with M. Briand in quest of a solution of the security problem. Jason's task was surely not more difficult.

#### MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S POLICY

In this connexion we feel compelled to refer to the publication by the *New York World* of an alleged Foreign Office memorandum in favour of a British military guarantee for France. A few weeks ago a similar memorandum was printed in the *Chicago Tribune*. How these documents reach the Press and to what extent they represent the views of the Foreign Office we cannot, of course, pretend to know, but at least one Paris paper is suggesting that their publication is intentional. The effect of such documents must be to encourage those Frenchmen who demand a Franco-British Alliance against Germany. Mr. Chamberlain declared in the House of Commons on Monday last that his policy of building a bridge between France and Germany "remains unchanged by subsequent events," and it is to be hoped that this declaration will convince politicians in Paris that we will never be a party to a perpetual military alliance against the Germans, or against anybody else. Any belief to the contrary would be a mistaken one, and no number of alleged Foreign Office memoranda will alter this fact.

#### THE LITTLE ENTENTE

The Foreign Ministers of the States which compose the Little Entente have just concluded one of their periodical conferences. They met in secrecy in Bucharest, but even such details of their discussions as they have allowed to leak out are disquieting. A few months ago there were indications that the Little Entente might become an instrument of conciliation. The uncertainty as to what the British Government is prepared to do to protect the present frontiers of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, however, has destroyed this

prospect. The Bucharest Conference has disturbed the Austrians by threats as to what will happen to them if they wish to unite with Germany, the Hungarians by accusations of militarism and irredentism, and the Bulgarians by suggestions that the Tsankoff Government does not really need any more troops in its struggle against Communism than it has already at its disposal. The sanctity of the frontiers of Eastern Europe has been reaffirmed, and M. Painlevé, in an interview given to a Rumanian paper, has declared emphatically that "security must exist for the whole of Europe or not at all." It is, therefore, obvious that the difficulties of drawing up a Western Pact without giving definite guarantees of a very similar nature to the new States of Eastern Europe tend to increase rather than to decrease.

#### MR. BALDWIN AS PEACE-MAKER

Mr. Lloyd George had the unnatural habit of composing political and industrial disputes by bidding the parties to them to breakfast, a meal at which no normal person could enter into negotiations. Mr. Baldwin, with greater wisdom, chooses to heal social dissensions by getting people together at dinner. He has a real gift for terminating disputes, and unlike Mr. Lloyd George does not trade on it. We wish him heartily all the success for which he has striven in a series of reconciling speeches and in his every act since he became Premier. But he must remember that a section of the Socialists are very suspicious of every leader of their movement who gets on good terms with a Conservative statesman. It would be lamentable if those with whom he exchanges confidences lost their control over Labour in proportion as they grew to understand his point of view.

#### THE FOOD PRICES REPORT AND SOCIALISM

With the main part of the Report on Food Prices we deal elsewhere, but something must be said of one remarkable minute of dissent, that signed by Mr. T. H. Ryland. He objects to the proposed Food Council on a great variety of grounds, but chiefly because he sees in the recommendation the thin edge of the wedge of Socialism. There is something in this criticism, but really more noteworthy is his objection to any attempt to separate the food supplying trade from all others. He is perfectly right in holding that no line can in logic and justice be drawn between these trades and others. Further, the materials in which these trades deal is often capable of other uses than those contemplated by the Commission, and it is a question whether bureaucratic interference would not be rendered futile if it were not extended to those other uses also.

#### 'THE RED FLAG'

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald does not like the song in which our Socialists are supposed to find inspiration, and indeed it is a lugubrious production. But the trouble is mainly with its tune, and as to that it would appear that whereas the author wrote his words to the tune of 'The White Cockade,' a Jacobite and eventually an Irish song, the Socialists persist in singing it to the tune of a degraded German hymn. Let Mr. Ramsay MacDonald be comforted. Neither Conservatism

nor Liberalism has any song to boast about, and efforts to coax one into existence in Conservative interests have not been inspiring. Labour, when it would read rather than sing, may find some forcible things in Ebenezer Elliot, and one very fine piece in William Morris. Its doleful anthem is not, on the whole, much worse than the things sung by Capitalists.

#### LORD BIRKENHEAD AND THE PRESS

Journalists are now the persons who fill in such gaps as may occur between special articles written by gloomy Deans, present and past Cabinet Ministers, gentlemen acquitted of murder or blackmail, retired lights o' love, and other celebrated amateurs. We do not rejoice over this poaching on the ground of the professional journalist, and we are sure that the public suffers by it, for public opinion is best expressed by those trained to elicit it and not by publishing the opinions of individuals. But we meekly acquiesce until we find a Cabinet Minister like Lord Birkenhead producing columns a week. Lord Birkenhead is responsible as Secretary of State for India for the welfare of 320 million people. That is work enough for any man without his undertaking to outdo a Grub Street hack in production of newspaper articles. We do not care to see Cabinet Ministers dependent on newspapers for the greater part of their income.

#### THE COLONIAL OFFICE

The reorganization of the Colonial Office has been under consideration for some time, and steps are likely shortly to be taken to put into effect the changes in the administration of the department that have been found necessary to meet the altered conditions in affairs connected with our overseas possessions. It is understood that an additional Under-Secretary of State, who is to be a member of the House of Lords, will be appointed. Coincident with these changes we have reason to believe some alteration will be made in the title of the Colonial Office. Now that the Dominions have passed into the status of nations, overseas sentiment is hardening against the limitations which the term Colonial involves, a view which is shared by the Secretary of State himself. This reform our readers will remember was proposed some time ago in these columns and it is therefore with some satisfaction that we find the views we then expressed taking practical shape. Our difficulty then was—and we believe the same difficulty is now confronting Downing Street—to find an alternative title that will be acceptable to all parties.

#### AUSTRIA AND GERMANY

As the late Mr. Alfred Lester used to assert in a once famous song, 'Every cloud is silver-lined,' and the anxiety caused by the possibility of Austrian union with Germany has had one hopeful result. Dr. Benes is now working for much closer economic relations between Czechoslovakia and Austria and, to this end, is founding an Austro-Czechoslovak Association. The average Austrian has no desire at all to be linked up again with the average German. Necessity, however, knows no law, and unless the economic barriers between Austria and her other neighbours disappear, Vienna, Treaty or no Treaty, will be compelled to join fortunes with Berlin. Dr. Benes

can, if he so desires, give Austria very great economic assistance, and if he has in fact now realized the importance of doing so, then Jugoslavia will follow suit and Austria may become the small, but relatively flourishing, state that was foreseen by the Financial Committee of the League of Nations when it prepared the financial reconstruction scheme.

#### LORD MILNER

Of Lord Milner we shall write more fully next week. It was a hard fate that bore him off on the eve of his election to the Chancellorship of Oxford University, a position which he would have filled with distinction and grace. Lord Milner had a hard fine mind, and a trained instinct for efficiency. This efficiency, while it made him one of the ablest and most thorough of administrators, robbed him, too, of much of the affection of the man in the street. The "good grey style" of his prose—as W. T. Stead called it—was typical also of the man himself: there were no high-lights about Lord Milner. His work for his country, his influence on affairs, were very much greater than those of many men more colourfully in the public eye. He was a great pro-Consul, and his death is a real loss to the Empire.

#### MR. MASSEY

Few personalities in Imperial politics, using the term Imperial in its wider sense, will be more missed than the late Prime Minister of New Zealand. An Ulsterman by birth, the late Mr. Massey was a stern opponent of Home Rule for Ireland, and although he was careful to exercise restraint on his personal feelings it was common knowledge that he never took kindly to the granting of Dominion status to the Free State. His rapid rise from the somewhat obscure position of a small farmer to fill the high office of Prime Minister was a great achievement. With him Imperial Preference was almost a religion and he never got over the attitude taken by the Socialist Government towards the resolutions passed at the Imperial and Economic Conference. His frequent appearances at the Imperial Conference table gave him many opportunities of impressing his views on his colleagues but his speeches were far too long and sorely tried the patience of his best friends. But he was a great patriot and his John Bull attributes and burly good nature made him a popular figure in this country.

#### A DOMESTIC TRAGEDY

A Society scandal in bird life is being enacted in Hyde Park before the public gaze. In the dell by Rotten Row a virtuous moorhen laid a nest full of eggs, but she had only been sitting on them for a day when an eggless heron, impelled by her mother-instinct, drove off the moorhen and, having enlarged the nest to suit her own convenience, sat on the eggs herself. Decadent Mr. Heron stood by and watched his wife, and even has helped her to enlarge the stolen nest. When the heron goes off in search of food the moorhen, who all the while sits watching her lawful home, scuttles back to her eggs, but in a few moments is driven off again in terror. This tragi-comedy is at the moment of writing "still running." It is, we believe, an unknown occurrence in natural history, and must astonish the patient photographer of "the aristocrats of the air."



## THE FOOD PRICES REPORT

THESE is a disposition in many quarters to dismiss the Report of the Royal Commission on Food Prices as platitudinous in its findings. It is being suggested also that the inquiry was superfluous, and was determined upon by the Government merely to allay popular clamour. These are opinions and suggestions from which we dissent. It is perfectly true that the findings of the Commission provide no "copy" for the stunt and scare Press. Whoever else may be disappointed thereat, it will not be the readers of the series of articles in which, as the Commission was getting to work, we examined the principal food supplies of the country. Broadly speaking, the Commission has found, as we predicted, that there are no gross, general evils which can be removed by direct and drastic action against profiteers. But because this conclusion is such as any person acquainted with the main facts and possessed of common-sense would reach independently, it does not follow that its statement by the Commission is superfluous. An authoritative announcement that nothing, except some fun, can be hoped from a pogrom of profiteers was needed in order that the nation may turn from sensational proposals to the sober business of reorganizing food supplies. Nothing that brushes aside silly exaggerations about the nation's food supplies, on which this country spend annually somewhere about £1,700,000,000, can be rightly regarded as a wasted effort.

But when the critics of the Report turn from its finding to its main recommendation, the establishment of a Food Council, we are disposed to agree with them. It is true that the Commission responsible for this recommendation are careful to guard against some of the dangers of bureaucratic interference with trade. They explain that they have not in view the creation of a new Department of State with a considerable staff. They are particularly anxious that, although replacing the existing Food Department of the Board of Trade, the Council should be completely autonomous in its relations with the Board, and should report to the President himself, as the Minister responsible to Parliament for its actions. This autonomy is insisted upon because the part they wish the new Food Council to play is not that of a Government Department administering Acts and Regulations, and therefore bound at all times by precedent and the letter of the law. They want the Council to be rather a mediator between producer, trader and consumer, working for the reconciliation of interests which are not to be regarded as necessarily conflicting. This ideal is developed by the signatories of the Report with some eloquence, not to say misplaced solemnity of tone, in their peroration. They point out that as in international affairs there is now a dim perception of the truth that the well-being of all nations is essential to the well-being of each, and as within each nation it is beginning to be understood, though we should rather say, beginning to be forgotten, that the welfare of every class is essential to the welfare of every other, so, swooping downward to bathos, within the staple food trades. . . . We refrain from completing our summary of the passage. The point is that, according to the Commissioners, "this ideal can never find its full expression until in some organ

of the State the consumer and the trader are brought together in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding."

Respect and understanding are necessary, indeed, but they will not be developed by any organ of the State. They will be created, if at all, only by the growth of honesty, efficiency and enterprise among traders and the decline of credulity and stupidity among consumers. We do not see the very numerous, but mostly very petty, reforms required if the nation is to be well and cheaply supplied with food resulting from the operation of any Food Council. We see them being effected by the action of traders and of the consuming public. The suppliers have to learn the lesson of co-operation, not only within each branch of production but as between one branch and another. Consumers have to learn that the long-established methods of supply, especially in regard to credit and delivery at the door, are not necessarily the best methods. Much of the trouble in regard to meat is due to the ignorant concentration of demand on what sometimes erroneously are regarded as the best joints, and that is itself due largely to the barbarism which reigns unrebuked in the British middle-class and working-class kitchen. Much of this trouble in regard to milk is due to insistence on the delivery of minute quantities at early hours, and to the poor domestic planning which sets up a demand, highly capricious as it is, from odd pennyworths of milk to supplement the quantity delivered. Much, again, of the trouble regarding bread is due to insistence on delivery, the cost of which in country areas and even at times in urban areas is disproportionate to the value of the article. Were the bakery part of a general store, the deliverer of bread would almost always be delivering other articles also, and the cost of delivery would be set against, not a few pennyworths of bread, but several shillings worth of edibles.

Of course, reforms of the kind we have roughly indicated would not suffice. In every branch of production there are some more serious changes to be made if the nation is to be well and cheaply supplied. But we have covered that ground before, and cannot go over it again. All that can now be said is that scarcely any of the changes we desire, and very few even of those desired by the Commission, are dependent on State interference. In one or two matters compulsion needs to be applied, but this could be done by a single legislative act, without any special machinery being set up. The most important matter relevant here is the holdings of meat in cold storage. The Commission follows the Linlithgow Report in urging that publication of stock in cold storage should be required periodically. This is undoubtedly necessary. There might also be some limit to the period for which meat can be kept in cold storage. The average period is short enough, not exceeding three weeks, but we have heard of unreasonable detention. To a sensitive mind there is something revolting in the idea of consuming antipodean lamb that has been laid down like port and rested quietly under the drums and trappings of three conquests. But the real argument against prolonged storage is that it gives the storage magnates increased opportunities of keeping up prices by postponing release until the most favourable moment.



## THE SILK DUTIES\*

BY HAROLD COX

THE most controversial issue created by the Budget arises out of Mr. Churchill's attempt to discover a new luxury tax. Filled with the idea that articles made of silk are necessarily luxuries, he proposes to tax both silk and artificial silk. Whatever may be said of pure silk, it is certain that the substance called artificial silk cannot fairly be classified as a luxury to any greater extent than cotton or wool. In practice artificial silk stockings are worn by many women as a substitute for cotton or woollen stockings; in practice also artificial silk is frequently combined with cotton and woollen materials. The primary objection to the proposed new duty is that it creates an additional complication in our revenue system. Throughout the greater part of the nineteenth century our successful Chancellors of the Exchequer were engaged in simplifying our revenue system so as to obtain the maximum of revenue with a minimum cost of collection, and a minimum of inconvenience to the contributor. Mr. Churchill has set to work to reverse this process. His proposed silk duties are estimated to yield £7,000,000 in a full year. As the total figures for our national expenditure are now over £800,000,000 this new item of revenue represents less than one per cent. of the sum that must be raised. Is it worth while to invent an entirely new tax to increase our revenue by one per cent.?

Even more important from the point of view of our commercial and industrial activities is the consideration that the proposed new duties will fall very largely upon raw materials. Pure silk, in the form known as waste, and artificial silk in various forms constitute an important part of the raw materials of our textile industries. Hitherto it has been an established tradition even with Tariff Reformers that raw materials should not be taxed. Mr. Churchill proposes to abandon this tradition. He hopes to escape from the difficulty by a series of rebates, and there was in his speech in the House of Commons an unpleasant suggestion that he might counter the general opposition to his tax by giving favourable rebates to particular interests. That is one of the ugly features that always arise when taxes are imposed on the materials of trade. All the available evidence shows that in practice it would be utterly impossible to give a rebate on export that would fairly and accurately compensate the home manufacturer for the duty he had to pay on the imported material. Artificial silk is used in hundreds of ways in combination with wool and cotton. Often a cotton or woollen tissue is made with a few threads of artificial silk interwoven. The duty on the artificial silk is so heavy that it may appreciably affect the price, even if only a small quantity is used, but it is clearly impossible in such cases for the customs officials accurately to ascertain exactly how much rebate is to be allowed.

The matter is further complicated by the proposal that the new duties should be subject to a preferential reduction in case of materials imported

from the Dominions. There would be, as Mr. Churchill definitely stated in his speech, a corresponding alteration in the rebate on export. To quote his words: "The rate of drawback would be the same as the import rate—the full import duty if the silk were of foreign origin and the preferential five-sixths if it were of imperial or home origin." How is it possible after a material has passed through the processes of spinning, weaving and dying in the factories of Lancashire or Yorkshire for Customs officials in London or Liverpool to ascertain whether the silk thread which they observe in a cotton or woollen tissue is derived from viscose imported from Canada or from the Continent? A whole retinue of spies would have to be employed to track every item of imported material from the day it was landed till the day it was exported.

A further very serious practical difficulty arises from the fact that the rebate can only be paid in practice to the shipper who is exporting the goods. He has had to buy them direct from the dyer, who bought them from the weaver, who in turn bought his yarn from the spinner. How in practice is an adjustment to be made between these various interests on comparatively small quantities of artificial silk mixed up with other materials? It is to be noted moreover that the effect of the duty, like any duty on raw materials, must be progressive. In the first place the use of any raw material necessarily involves a certain amount of progressive waste. In the second place, if the price of a raw material is enhanced by a tax there is a progressive capital increase in the cost of production, so that the final cost of the duty is considerably greater than the amount of the duty originally paid. Mr. Churchill has apparently grasped this point, and talks of making generous allowances to meet the difficulty. But all these concessions are themselves an admission that the tax is unwise as a financial device. The well recognized principles of sound taxation require that taxes should be simple in character and that what they take out of the pocket of the taxpayer should be as little as possible in excess of the net sum available for the public treasury. Judged by this test the tax on silk stands condemned.

One very practical difficulty that will be created by the silk tax is the delay that must occur while exporters are attempting to recover from the Customs the rebates to which they should be entitled. Often goods have to be shipped by a certain steamer on a certain date in order to meet an order from abroad; often the factory that has received the order has to work overtime in order to catch the steamer. When the goods thus produced at high pressure arrive at the port they may be held up while the Customs officials are struggling to ascertain whether the glossy material visible in a woollen or cotton tissue is mercerized yarn or artificial silk; to measure the amount of taxable material, and to determine whether that material came in on the preferential imperial rate or on the full foreign rate. If the steamer is thus missed the order may be cancelled.

In effect Mr. Churchill is scrapping the valuable experience upon which our financial system has been based in order to secure a new item of revenue absolutely insignificant in proportion to the total revenue of the Exchequer.

\* We have invited Mr. Harold Cox to express his views on the Silk Duties, although they do not wholly coincide with our own, because we know they will interest our readers.

## TOO OLD AT FORTY

By A. A. B.

“**E**VERY man has a right to be conceited until he is successful” is a saying of Disraeli which is the only excuse for the ludicrous over-confidence of the modern babes—if I were American I should say “boobs”—who range the town in the garb of grown-ups, of both sexes. Visitors to Mr. Beerbohm’s caricatures at the Leicester Galleries will remember the last one, next the door on the left as you go in. It depicts a modern maid, sprawling on a settee with her skirt over her knees, a cocktail in her hand, a long cigarette-holder in her mouth, and philosophizing to her attendant boy on things in general. I will not soil these pages by repeating the terrible swear-words with which Miss expresses her opinion that if all the old blighters who now rule and serve England were put out on the pavement and their places taken by bloods and flappers, the Empire might still be saved. The boy solemnly and concisely replies “I think you’re bloody well right.”

People tell me that young people have always believed that they could do things better than their elders.

We think our fathers fools, so wise we grow;  
Our wiser sons perchance will think us so.

The couplet is Pope’s; but if the novels of Jane Austen, Dickens, Thackeray, Trollope, Whyte Melville, reflect the realities of life, the young people of the nineteenth century, though sometimes obstinate in their love affairs, were gracefully diffident, and outwardly at all events deferential. It is the war, I am told, that is responsible for the bitterness and bumpiousness of present-day youngsters. It is easy to be wise after the event; and looking backwards it certainly does seem as if Messrs. Haldane, Grey and Asquith might have prevented the Great War. Lords Morley and Loreburn thought so. Still remembering, it most assuredly does occur to all but those who were in the War Cabinet and in the higher commands that our generals and admirals might have presented us with at least one decisive victory by sea or land. The Napoleonic War lasted twenty years, but at least it left us Trafalgar and Waterloo to talk about. The Great War has left us nothing but blurred controversies over Jutland and Gallipoli and Cambrai; neither a Nelson nor a Wellington, but a Haig and a Jellicoe, not a Chatham but a Kitchener. *Mediocritas mediocritatum, omnia mediocritas*. Grant all this, and grant further that the Coalition Government which followed the war excited impossible hopes, and in the panicky effort to satisfy them, squandered public money recklessly instead of sitting down to pay our debts by economy. All these things must be admitted because by nobody are they now denied. Is there any evidence that things would have been better done by younger men, by Under Secretaries of State and major-generals and naval captains? If not, the disappointment and resentment are in no sense the property of the rising generation. All the facts that have come to light show that everybody, British, French, and German soldiers and civilians, made gross mis-

calculations about a war in which the fortuitous factor was larger than in any previous one.

“Too old at forty” has a definite and cruel meaning in the industrial world. It may well be that a man who lives by the sweat of his body, not of his mind, may suffer a decline in market value after forty. Though even in that case I should have thought that the acquired skill of hand and eye more than compensated for the loss of muscle. However I do not know enough about manual labourers to dogmatize; nor is it of them that I write, but of the clerical, professional and political classes, of those, in short, who assist in governing others by word or pen. The only way of confuting the boasts and reproaches of the *imperiti juvenes* is by asking them in what situations they think that they would do better than their seniors. Take a young barrister and set him in his wig and gown to argue points of law and compare precedents in the court of appeal or in banc. You will find that from sheer inexperience he will not do himself justice, and that a question or two from the bench will reduce him to stuttering confusion, not because he doesn’t know the facts or the cases, but because he is not cool enough to marshal them. As for politics, we have seen what risks we ran from a Labour Government, whose members knew nothing about government. Take acting. The queen of the music-hall stage is Miss Ada Reeve, and she is over forty. In whatever department of practice you choose, ease, grace, and authority are only to be won by doing the thing over and over again for a great many years. I except musicians. I don’t know why—the name of the boy and girl concert prodigies is legion. In the art of war I doubt whether a Napoleon or a Maurice de Saxe would be possible in these days, because of the enormous size and complexity of a warfare in which whole nations take the field.

In literature the case against youth and in favour of experience is strongest. Disraeli was just over forty when he wrote ‘Coningsby,’ forty-four when he became leader of the Protectionists, and forty-six when he became Chancellor of the Exchequer. Macaulay said that “no great work of imagination has ever been produced under the age of thirty or thirty-five years, and the instances are few in which they have been produced under forty.” Byron, Shelley, Keats, and Dickens are exceptions: but the list of middle-aged successes is overwhelming. Anthony Trollope was forty-seven when he published ‘Orley Farm,’ not his first novel, but his first success. George Eliot was forty when ‘Adam Bede’ appeared, her first novel. Cervantes was fifty-two when he published the first part of ‘Don Quixote’; Defoe fifty-eight when he wrote ‘Robinson Crusoe’; Milton fifty-eight at the date of ‘Paradise Lost’; Swift fifty-nine when he wrote ‘Gulliver’s Travels’; Walter Scott was forty-three when ‘Waverley’ saw the light under a pseudonym; Adam Smith was fifty-three when he gave ‘The Wealth of Nations’ to the world; Johnson was forty-six when his Dictionary appeared; and it was after forty that Shakespeare wrote his great trilogy, ‘Othello,’ ‘Macbeth,’ and ‘King Lear.’ He was thirty-eight when ‘Hamlet’ was first produced.

I have left women, except George Eliot, out of the reckoning, not from lack of gallantry, but



because it is only in the last five years that women have challenged and to some extent displaced men in the fields of action and literature. It is too early to pronounce on results. In the eighteenth century women were more powerful than in the nineteenth. Under the first three Georges England was governed by the aristocracy, and under aristocracies the politics of the alcove, or *the ruelle* as the French call it, count for a good deal. Lord Hervey, the reputed lover of Queen Caroline (of Anspach) told Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (when she was in her forty-sixth year) that he preferred women over forty.

Just in the noon of life, those glorious days  
When the mind ripens, ere the form decays.

Whether Hervey was sincere or not, the lines are good and express the charm which an educated and experienced woman will always possess. A pint of experience is worth a gallon of enthusiasm, and a hogshead of conceit. And that is the answer to Max's young woman with her *cuisse de nymphe* stockings and the young man with his cock-tail brevity.

## MR. CHURCHILL IN HIS ELEMENT

By SYDNEY BROOKS

I AM bound to say the personal aspects of the Budget engross me more than its substance. That has often in the past been the case with events in which a Churchill was engaged. It has never been anything but the case with the multitudinous affairs in which our own Churchill has involved himself. They have borrowed so much from the intrusion of his impetuous personality as to be well nigh overlaid by it. This Budget, for instance, is pure Churchill. It bears his stamp so emphatically that already men are considering it less as an essay in national finance than as a turning-point in the fortunes of an individual. That may be an over-estimate. Mr. Churchill has had so many turning-points in his career that one hesitates to pronounce even his first Budget as decisive. But it is at least of the first political importance to him that it should reach the Statute Book substantially unchanged. A failure now would be a serious set-back. A victory—and especially, as this promises to be, a single-handed victory—will more than ever mark him as the second-in-command of the Conservative Party.

A tale has been going the rounds about M. Caillaux which has an English bearing and an English analogy. It is said that after the first meeting of the Cabinet the new Minister of Finance waited till his colleagues had gone and then in tones of passionate gratitude assured the Prime Minister that no man ever owed another such a personal and political debt as he, M. Caillaux, owed to M. Painlevé. Mr. Churchill may well have made a similar remark to Mr. Baldwin. Certainly our English Chancellor of the Exchequer has as good reason to feel himself under an everlasting obligation to our English Prime Minister as has the French Minister to his Chief. The service Mr. Baldwin then rendered Mr. Churchill, for magnanimity, timeliness, and courage, has no parallel in our modern politics. For Mr. Churchill's position six months ago was such that almost any Government office would have been accepted with alacrity. He did not

dream of the Chancellorship and it is, I believe, the fact that when the Prime Minister first mentioned it he thought Mr. Baldwin was referring to the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster. That he should be placed at a bound not merely in the Government but in the Cabinet, and not merely in the Cabinet but in the post that stands in the nearest and most direct succession to the Premiership—this was something that even his agile mind and inveterate self-confidence took time to grasp.

What invested Mr. Baldwin's act with a peculiar grace and virility was that Mr. Churchill was not then, nor is he now, a popular or trusted member of the Conservative Party. The Prime Minister may fairly be said to have imposed him upon his followers both in and out of the House. The rank and file were not prepared to receive all at once and effusively a returned strayer from the fold who meanwhile had done them as much political damage as any man in the country. They were glad, or at least the wiser among them were, to have once more on their side a man of Mr. Churchill's exceptional intrepidity, brains, debating power and instinct for statesmanship. His readmittance they welcomed but the speed and the completeness with which their leader rehabilitated him, seating him instantly on the right hand of authority, provoked many murmurings only some of which were loyally suppressed. Such acts not merely of reinstatement but of swift and unlooked-for elevation are not carried out in any sphere, in politics least of all, without causing jealousies and soreness.

Mr. Churchill, therefore, like M. Caillaux, must have had three somewhat special anxieties when he stood up to make his first financial statement. The prime anxiety would be to prove himself worthy of Mr. Baldwin's confidence; the next to placate those of his party who still regarded him with suspicion by convincing them that they had recovered in him a first-rate political asset; the third to show that his turn for the business of government had matured during his absence from Parliament and even in an unfamiliar and highly technical office could be trusted to repeat and expand the triumphs of his earlier days. Circumstances have thus given to his Budget a variety of interest and a momentousness that one could be sure would call out all his powers. That the speech in which he introduced it was an outstanding Parliamentary performance goes without saying, but I imagine that no one would have been more disappointed than Mr. Churchill if the friendly applause that greeted it had continued. It is bad for a Budget when all men speak well of it on the first night. It would have been disastrous for Mr. Churchill if this cordiality had persisted.

In fact it has not persisted. Those who began by blessing the Budget with reservations are now more apt to be heard cursing it with none at all. The change must have been the one thing needed to make the Chancellor's happiness complete. A fighter by every impulse of his being, it is a tonic for him to be wallowing, as he is now, in combat. A rattling self-reliant struggle against converging odds is one of his ideas, and not at all a bad one, of what makes life worth while. The odds are undoubtedly there; so also is the self-reliance. It would be going too far to say that Mr. Churchill



is fighting the battle of the Budget alone. But the poverty of the support he has so far received from his own side has been very marked. As the debate goes on somebody perhaps will be found to stand shoulder to shoulder with him. The Unionist Party is particularly rich in ex-Chancellors and some of them must surely at some time put in a word for him. But at present Mr. Churchill seems to be facing the storm alone. It is a storm, too, from many quarters. He has at least five considerable Parliamentary fights on his hands simultaneously. For a man of his temperament no better recipe for joyousness could have been devised.

First there are the McKenna duties. All the Labour men, most of the Liberals, and possibly a few Conservatives, are against him there. Then there is the tax on silk which many people regard as not only Protection but bad Protection. It has certainly convulsed both the silk trade and its many allied and subsidiary trades and the Chancellor finds himself confronted with a small army of enraged industrialists. When he escapes from them it is to be met by a few business men in the House and a larger number of economists outside it who believe that the return to the gold standard is a profound mistake. And round the corner are massed the manufacturing forces of the country wanting to know how on earth industry can support the £14,000,000 a year imposed on it by the new insurance scheme. Besides these, too, are the inconveniently persistent critics who demand to have it explained to them why expenditure is up by £9,000,000 and who point to that fatal addition as the Achilles heel of the whole Budget.

So that Mr. Churchill is quite in his element. Six months ago he probably knew little of the gold standard and less of silk. Now he has to meet attacks on these and other subjects and to speak on them authoritatively and with the air of one who has mastered all their repulsive technicalities. And what is more he is doing it. There may have been Chancellors better equipped by training, but in point of industry, a clear head, a ready tongue and a certain largeness of conception and method Mr. Churchill holds his own with the best of them. It is a dramatic, an arresting, performance to which he is treating Parliament and the country; and not one of the actors in it is enjoying it more than he is. Which may be one of the reasons why the essentials of victory will be found on his side.

#### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

##### EXHIBITIONS

LEICESTER GALLERIES (Leicester Square, W.C.2). Paintings by William S. Horton.

ARLINGTON GALLERY (22 Old Bond Street, W.1). Thirtieth Annual Exhibition of the Royal Society of Miniature Painters.

##### THEATRES

EVERYMAN, HAMPSTEAD. 'Magic.' On Saturday, May 16.

BIRMINGHAM REPERTORY THEATRE. 'The Marvellous History of St. Bernard.' On Saturday, May 16.

NEW SCALA THEATRE. Renaissance Theatre in 'The Maid's Tragedy.' On Sunday, May 17.

THE PLAYHOUSE. 'The Right Age to Marry.' On Monday, May 18.

Q THEATRE. 'Common Clay.' On Monday, May 18.

STRAND THEATRE. 'Ordeal.' On Tuesday, May 19.

COMEDY THEATRE. 'The Crooked Friday.' On Wednesday, May 20.

NEW SCALA THEATRE. International Society in 'The Sons of Jacob.' On Friday, May 22.

#### THE COMEDY OF WESTMINSTER

MR. CHURCHILL continues to march steadily from triumph to triumph, Mr. Snowden to dispute with dogged persistence every inch of the way. If a smiling face is the hall-mark of a conqueror, if unfailing good-humour betokens knowledge of victory, then is the Chancellor of the Exchequer not only an easy winner but also he is supported by the certainty of success. If frowns and sneers, if bitterness and insults, if perpetually varying modes of attack, indicate the side that is beaten and the knowledge of defeat, then assuredly is Mr. Snowden aware that the half-fought battle is already lost.

It was at the end of last week that Mr. Snowden's envy hatred and all uncharitableness reached their high-water mark. "The Chancellor of the Exchequer," he hissed, "is quite incapable of understanding that any person can be moved or prompted by honest political convictions." Were such an accusation to be made against one member of the million and a quarter unemployed we should have the whole Labour Party leaping to their feet, waving their arms in the air and shrieking the House down. As it was several Conservatives were moved to resentment and called upon the Right Hon. Gentleman to withdraw, but Mr. Churchill turned to those behind him with a reassuring smile and a shrug which calmed their indignation into contempt.

Mr. Snowden continued in the same strain, and on the subject of the red letter scare which, he said, dragged old women from their beds to vote for the Conservatives at the last election, he was rapidly lashing himself into a fury when the sudden appearance of Black Rod with a message from the House of Lords threw a douche of cold water over the rather artificial heat which was being engendered.

These visitations of Black Rod must sorely puzzle the uninitiated onlooker, and I am waiting for the day when some Labour member will protest against them as unwarranted survivals of the past which interfere with the liberty and dignity of the House of Commons. No matter what the business in hand may be, at the advent of Black Rod the door is immediately shut in order that it may be knocked upon and opened, the House is called to order, the orator who is in possession of it is obliged to sit down in the middle of his sentence and the House is summoned in resonant tones to attend the House of Peers in order to hear the Royal Assent to certain Acts of Parliament. Off goes the Speaker, humbly following in the wake of Black Rod and followed himself by a representative of each front bench and as many members as have the energy or the curiosity to witness the scene. When he reappears in about a quarter of an hour the air has cleared, the members have diminished, and the unfortunate orator who has to take up his speech where he left it is almost certainly robbed of his effect.

A new play sometimes suffers from over-advertisement before production. A thrill that has been announced often falls flat when performed, and a climax which the audience is expecting usually proves an anti-climax. So it was with the

much heralded debate upon the silk tax. At last we were about to behold the much heralded rift in the Tory Party, at last the gathered clouds of outraged industry were about to burst in torrents of disapproval on the head of the Chancellor; the Government would be forced to a humiliating surrender, the Budget might have to be scrapped, there were no limits to the possibilities of the situation. The twin mountains of the daily Press had been in heavy labour, but ridiculous indeed was the mouse which their exertions brought forth.

It began with the still, small, but seldom silent voice of Captain Wedgewood Benn. He wanted to raise a point of order—he always does. With that puzzled, plaintive look of a clever schoolboy asking the master a question to which he secretly knows the answer, he inquired how it was possible to discuss silk and artificial silk when nobody knew exactly what was meant by the terms. The point was easily disposed of. This, Mr. Speaker pointed out, was not the moment to talk of definitions. That could be done when the Finance Bill was discussed. In case, however, any doubt existed on the matter Mr. Austin Hopkinson, the independent member for Mossley, sprang to his feet and announced that everybody knew exactly what silk was, and the definition included artificial silk—it was merely “a fibre produced by the extension of a viscous substance through minute orifices in such a way as to make filaments of a homogeneous nature.”

Greatly assisted by this interesting information we proceeded to consider the silk duties. Two Labour members argued at some length that the operation of the duties should be postponed for four years, by which time they admittedly expected that their party would be once more in power. When the duties were first published the shares of Messrs. Courtaulds rose and the Government were indignantly denounced by Mr. Snowden for deliberately bestowing a bonus upon the richest and most flourishing industry in the country. The shares have since gone down and we are now told that the wicked Chancellor has selected a young and struggling industry which can barely keep its head above water and which will be ruined by the oppressive taxation that is proposed.

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The theoretic apostles of Free Trade Mr. Runciman and Sir Alfred Mond as usual aired their theories with the eloquence and ability which they never fail to show, but the expert criticism which we had been led to expect from those engaged in the industry failed lamentably to take shape. On the contrary, Mr. Remer, the member for Macclesfield—a constituency more concerned in the silk trade than any other in England—gave the proposed duties his qualified approval, while Mr. Hammersley who comes from Oldham and sits for Stockport, speaking with some authority on behalf of the cotton industry in which he is engaged, assured the House that the suggested taxes were in no sense inimical to the best interests of that industry.

Mr. Snowden tried to make us cry about the cruelty of taxing the “simple finery of working girls,” but the House proceeded dry eyed to the division from which the threatened Government emerged with a majority of over a hundred and seventy.

FIRST CITIZEN

## IN PRAISE OF PING-PONG

BY GERALD GOULD

IT is strange that work should be so well spoken of, and play so ill. What miasma of the mind, what bequest of dark divinity-detesting superstition, moves us to speak our enemy fair and mis-call our friend? Even so did the old Italians pursue the marriage-processions of their dear ones with opprobrious songs; and people to-day say eagerly: “I know it will rain,” when what they mean is that they hope it won’t. Yet if there be indeed spirits presiding over the playing-fields—good spirits, jolly spirits, with round red faces and quick limbs: spirits propitious to the winning of Waterloo—they must get weary of hearing their rivals of the workshop courted with so senile an adulation. Even those milder deities who brood upon sedentary occupations—old Sarah Battle, blessed for ever in Elysium with “a clear fire, a clean hearth, and the rigour of the game”; or brave Elia, her creator and recorder, enjoying over his folios one eternal winter evening with “the world shut out”—even these may resent with some bitterness the perpetual praise of what few seek and fewer still enjoy. Work may, for all I know, be a necessity, a discipline, an anodyne; a world without work might (though I would risk it) prove a dull place, by sheer lack of a contrast to enhance the pleasures of our pastimes; work—let us admit it if we must—is all very well in its own time and place: but play’s the thing. Work is rude, play gentle; work tyrannous, play kind; work subservient to an end, play its own purpose and excuse.

To do the British people justice, they take their pleasures seriously. They know, deep down in those places of elemental conviction where mere reason holds no sway, that the chief good of man is to hit or kick a ball. The ball itself varies in size, consistency and momentum with the seasons; but the principle is the same. The one remains, the many change and pass. The Dauphin of France, thinking to rebuke our English Henry for his pursuit of an idle game, sent him a tun of tennis-balls; but Henry, always self-righteous and self-possessed, was apt with his answer:

When we have match’d our rackets to these balls,  
We will in France, by God’s grace, play a set  
Shall strike his father’s crown into the hazard.

That was to anticipate the Iron Duke. The one criticism, indeed, which a patriotic Englishman can allow himself of his fellow-countrymen is this—they are still sluggishly indifferent towards a game which, played with balls and bats, is yet possible in the dining-room. *We have, as a nation, criminally neglected ping-pong.* Yet there is no other game which so exquisitely exercises the muscles, the mind and the temper—which so calls for complete abandonment and iron self-control, for lightning speed in decision and in motion, for calm of spirit in the face of breaks, cuts, spins and flukes. There is nothing against it except its silly-sounding name; and the British, a nation of realists, will give a game a bad name and play it. (The word “cricket” itself, robbed of its magical associations, is poor and thin.)

Whist was all very well; and so is bridge, whist’s shingled and slim-ankled daughter. But



they are sedentary and anxious games, and money passes. For your pure sport, sport for sport's sake, you must be hitting a ball. Chess is for the few and the mad; and the cross-word puzzle, unless I mistake the signs, is sloping to its close. Ping-pong remains, wooing us in the words of Shakespeare: "Let me for ever be your table-sport." Have we the right to stop our ears like the adder, before such a plea? I have seen ping-pong played with so much virtuosity that the eye and the heart delighted in its pace and curves: I have seen that celluloid ball, a trifle light as air, soar and dip like a swallow, and defeat expectation like the caprices of a lover. This I saw at the contest for the London championship; and went reverently home and burnt my little wooden bat.

But the next day I bought another. For the craving, once fastened upon you, can never be shaken off. Golfers speak in this way of golf. There may be something in what they say: I have not come to it: nor do I know for certain whether golf is ever played, or only elaborated in club-rooms as a myth. But ping-pong I have seen with my eyes. And I have seen its spell cast over the differing types, sections, sexes, races and orders that compose and confuse mankind. The grave and elderly are drawn in, deprecatorily: they will take a hand at it: it is long since they have played: they remember when they were boys. . . . But in the middle of reminiscence they are sweating with the best. And the young, the supercilious, the intellectual, have come to scoff and remained to play.

Mark, too, how it develops and reveals character. Here is a player of perfect style and nonchalance, the Hayward or Norman Brookes, to all appearance, of the green table: he will never triumph like them, because the germ of self-distrust lurks uncomprehended in his blood—or perhaps a demon of pride, making him despise the victory which other men desire. By this sin Satan fell. And here is the painful plodder, accurate and ugly in his methods, tenacious, unbeatable because he does not know when he is beaten, proving afresh that the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong. This next one goes to pieces if he is winning; that other, if he is losing. It is life in miniature, the game: ambition, envy, attainment and despair: life shrunk to nice proportions and made endurable.

There are those, no doubt, who read the allegory otherwise.

The Ball no Question makes of Ayes and Noes,  
But Right or Left as strikes the Player goes.

It has not been generally observed that there is an error in Omar's melancholy fatalism: to Destiny he gives the part of "Him that toss'd Thee down into the Field," to man the ignominious function of the ball: but no one at all in that case is the player. Our own allegory is better: man the player, and the smitten ball his fate. It is true that there comes an occasion when the difference between player and plaything dwindles. But so it is also with workman and work. "Who is the Potter, pray, and who the Pot?" And to what common and dusty end may they not come? But no man of spirit will hit a ball less wholeheartedly because he cannot go on hitting it for ever. The business of life is not to guess how the game will end, but to play it.

## THE COMING OPERA SEASON

By DYNELEY HUSSEY

LAST Sunday while listening to that compost of rant and bathos called 'The Orphan,' it occurred to me what an admirable libretto Otway's tragedy would make for an opera in the old grand style. It was only afterwards, on reaching home, that I had time to glance at the note on the programme, in which Mr. Allan Wade frankly acknowledged that the Phoenix Society brought the play forward as an interesting antique and suggested that "the emotions which were raised and satisfied by the great tragedians of the past, now find their account in Grand Opera." It is a curious fact that opera has, for the most part, taken on the cast-off garments of the fashionable drama from the days of Purcell, the refurbisher of Shakespeare, who was regarded as a dull old fogey by the high-brows of the late seventeenth century, to our own day, when we have seen Puccini galvanizing the dead melodramas of Sardou and his kind so that they make the motions of living bodies. Of course there have been exceptions, Mozart and Wagner; but they can be made to prove any rule.

But a more curious thing is that England, which has given to the world so much full-blooded drama, has never produced similar works for the operatic stage. The contemporaries of Shakespeare, Marlowe and Fletcher, wrote music which is notable for its sedateness. This is not to say that it is devoid of emotion; but its emotion is very different from that of the tragedies. I cannot do better than quote Roger North, who likens it to "sitting in a pleasant cool air in a temperate summer evening." The music of Purcell again is graceful, polished and delicate, not to be compared with the crude vehemence of Otway. After Purcell there is nothing in the grand manner for the stage. So we have to go abroad when we wish to satisfy those emotions which were aroused by the sonorous periods of the great tragedians of the past. That those emotions still exist and demand satisfaction there can be no doubt. They are less strong in the fashionable world at the moment; for is not 'Der Rosenkavalier' the rage in circles where noses turn up in scorn at Wagner's name and 'Rigoletto' is mocked by the young person who thinks it will be "tremendous fun" to see 'Lucia di Lammermoor'?

On Monday night at Covent Garden Theatre an opera season of undiminished grandeur will begin and summer, at least in the social sense, will be here. We may pardonably indulge in a little pleasurable anticipation, for the new Syndicate is showing a wise policy. It has re-engaged all those artists who made the German season last year such a brilliant success, so far as they happened to be available, and has evidently made efforts to strengthen the weaker places. The tenors are always a difficulty, and I have yet to hear a Siegfried, a Walther and a Tristan who are more than merely satisfactory. Rudolph Ritter, who is to sing Walther among other parts, is, within those limits, the best Siegfried I have heard, his lyrical singing in the second act being really first-rate. The other new tenors, Laurenz Hofer (Tristan) and Fritz Perron (Lohengrin), are unknown quan-



tities to me. But these operas will be worth hearing for the singing of that magnificent baritone, Friedrich Schorr, who should be a superb Sachs, of Lotte Lehmann, Gertrud Kappel, Maria Olczewska and above all, Frida Leider, who is again (if the present programme is unaltered) to sing only once as Isolde. As her performance last year was the finest individual piece of work in opera I have ever seen, I urge those who were so unfortunate as to miss it not to let the opportunity slip again.

The wisdom of the new Syndicate is shown not only in building upon foundations already laid, but also in rejecting things which are at present beyond its powers. There have been a good many preliminary complaints, that the 'Ring' is not being given and that 'Don Giovanni' is not on the list of Italian operas, and so on and so forth. The case against the 'Ring' is fairly conclusive. Apart from the fact that it means beginning at an hour when all but the leisured ones find it impossible to go to the opera, it seems to me that the tetralogy is best laid aside until the Syndicate can afford to give us a new production more in accordance with modern stage-craft—an expense which it is obviously impossible for them to contemplate at the moment. With regard to 'Don Giovanni' the Syndicate have at least been honest. It has been the custom for many years to insert this work in the list of operas "to be selected from," in order to give an air of decent respectability to an otherwise dreary catalogue. There seems to have been no genuine intention to put Mozart's masterpiece on the stage. And those who grumble, might pause to think of the excessive difficulties which 'Don Giovanni' presents to the producer, apart from the question of getting singers capable of doing justice to it in a large theatre. For it is one thing to sing Mozart in a tiny house like the Residenz-Theater at Munich, which is incidentally the right place for it, and quite another to have to address an audience part of which is several hundred feet away.

So we must be content in the Italian season with less god-like fare. We are promised some unfamiliar modern works and some singers who have made big reputations. For the Italian season this year has been organized as thoroughly as the German. The whole programme will be announced beforehand and the operas will not be thrown almost night by night upon the stage with any singers who may be handy. This casual procedure, due rather to misfortune than to any definite fault of the late Syndicate, made last year's Italian season as great a failure as the German was a success. With popular works and singers like Maria Jeritza, Toti dal Monte, Eide Norena, Elisabeth Rethburg and Ernesto Badini to do them justice, this year should mark a return to the old standards of Covent Garden, and then in future years we may hope for a real expansion of the repertoire. There are among the Italian company some unknown quantities. The new conductor, Sergio Failoni, has worked under Toscanini and is reputed to be a remarkable musician. I hope he will prove the equal of Bruno Walter. Hopes, as regards tenors, centre in Arnoldo Lindi, Franco lo Guidice and Giacomo Lauri-Volpi who is reported to have a voice of enormous power. Well, Covent Garden is a big place and its foundations stood firm when Tamagno sang.

## THE THEATRE

### MR. MAUGHAM'S NEW PLAY

*Rain.* Adapted by John Colton and Clemence Randolph from a story by W. Somerset Maugham. The Garrick Theatre.

BY IVOR BROWN

"THE influence of climate upon character." Myriads of schoolboys have bitten their pen-holders and looked through the window at green fields and splashed some platitudes on to paper on this familiar theme. It is just as well that they knew not the island of Pago-Pago, where the rain-fall is three hundred inches in the year and one must settle down to hear the rattle and swish of a tropical downpour for a week at a time. The accompaniment to Mr. Somerset Maugham's story is played on a water-sprout and the atmosphere in which his tragedy is framed is that of dank, steaming desolation. On the stage the sun shines in forty-nine plays out of fifty; in our normal comedies it is always abnormal summer. What leading actress would put up with three acts in a raincoat and a sodden hat?

On Pago-Pago there are an American governor, a detachment of marines, a quarantine officer, a ramshackle hotel, some aborigines with primitive cults, and the aforesaid rain. Not a healthy spot for incarceration at the orders of the quarantine dictator. What with the weather and the close quarters of the hotel the compulsory visitors to Pago-Pago may be relied upon to provoke some mutual irritation. It will be like prisoner's madness in a mild form. So one thinks. But when one sees the glint in the Reverend Davidson's eye one knows him for a zealot who may go mad but will certainly not be mild. Nor is he. Harmless, if sceptical, are his companions Dr. and Mrs. Macphail; faith may shake its head over the doctor's views, but it need not be set aflame with the lust and fury of salvationism. It is otherwise with Sadie Thompson. Her clothes proclaim the scarlet woman; her gramophone is the sign and symbol of the Babylonian; her company (for she has the marines about her in a moment) brands her as uncommonly seductive. Her past, when all is known, contains a criminal offence in San Francisco and a career in the red-light quarter of Honolulu. Was there ever such "a case" for missionary Davidson?

Davidson, though Mr. Malcolm Keen played his part in English, is an American and he is not to be written off as a too fantastic scourge of Jehovah. We may imagine that English Puritanism has mitigated the fury of its lash and that we no longer export Cromwellian fanatics in order to make Christianity seem loathsome to the heathen. But the Puritanism of America has deep roots and sturdy and bears queer, rancorous fruits. The spiritual bullying which Davidson inflicts on Sadie, his insistence that she should go back to San Francisco and serve a three years' sentence for her soul's sake instead of slipping off to Sydney and starting again, his willingness to blackmail the governor of the island into driving Sadie back to a U.S.A. gaol, his raging lust for purity, all these deeds and qualities may be understood in the glaring lights of American religiosity. If anyone doubts the existence of the Reverend Davidson let them consult not only

American fiction but American fact, e.g., 'Americana' in 'The American Mercury.' Beside him, no doubt, the petty rabble of vice-crusaders, forward-lookers, hymn-hounds, and uplifters are mild company. But I did not think the ferocity of his righteousness incredible.

Davidson, like Sadie, is "a case." Repressed to the verge of torture (for he has never consummated his marriage) his passion for purity becomes a stinging, semi-sensual affliction. The cruelty with which he would flog Sadie through heaven's gates is a perversion of the spirit that has obvious sexual affinities. It is all the more likely therefore that, while he is making his convert, she is making hers. She repents of vice and he of virtue. Her finding of salvation is as momentary as his fall. She rises flamboyant from her adventure; he cuts his throat upon the rain-soaked shore.

Mr. Maugham's story makes an effective stage-play. With its harshness and its lack of mercy, with its adventures in the uglier aspects of sexual psychology, it is distinctly a piece for the post-war public and may prove as successful as the sugared nonsense called 'Romance' which was one of our war-time visitations. The son of asceticism and the daughter of joy are old stage-companions and the conflict of black coat with scarlet woman will continue as long as melodrama remains. Variation comes with the stress the author gives to the aspects of the battle and in this case the stress is popular. Scourges of Jehovah are not in fashion and the pornography that is informed with the quality of mercy and with the psychological doctrine of repressions can certainly attract. And around all this starkness of the human beings is the horror of the dank and dripping tropics amid which the clash of Christian and pagan shows both in degradation.

As Sadie Thompson Miss Olga Lindo proved beyond a doubt that a great talent has been neglected by our managers during recent years. In her husky intensity, in her flashy garrulity, in her sombre moments of repentance she penetrated to the very core and fibre of America's outcast daughter; never playing the part with too full an aim at sympathy, and as thorough-going in her coarseness as in her charm, Miss Lindo missed nothing of the tremendous opportunity that this part bestowed upon her. In other respects Mr. Basil Dean's usual flair for correct casting was not prominent. Mr. J. H. Roberts made little of the doctor who plays common-sense *raisonneur* to the piece; his past services to the stage as country vicars and mild-mannered clerks of the law were living on in the dreamy, shambling doctor of his creation. And as Davidson Mr. Malcolm Keen was giving us no more than competent presentation. The full fury of mingled righteousness and desire demanded a more elemental crudity, less of polished stone and more of igneous rock. It seemed to me to be a McKinnel part played with a skilful actor's address but without the McKinnel personality. As Davidson's wife Miss Marda Vanne was admirable; in the background was the perfect fit for the hotel-keeper in Mr. Shep Camp and Mr. Stuart Sage was equally plausible as an American marine. Mr. Dean's production framed it all with the usual aptitude, while some unseen master created a cautionary climate with his water-tap.

## ART

### OLD MASTERS

BY ANTHONY BERTRAM

Loan Exhibition. Agnew's Galleries, 43 Old Bond Street.

THE exhibition organized by Messrs. Agnew in aid of the Royal Northern Hospital is one of great artistic merit and interest. Only at such exhibitions is the average person able to see certain of the masterpieces of art which remain in private collections, and to see the Signorelli and van der Weyden alone is an opportunity which should not be let go by.

The 'Madonna and Child' by the Cortonese master is a most original and stimulating work. The realization of the child is wonderfully "solid," like all Signorelli's nudes, like even the early child in the National Gallery 'Nativity.' The sweep of line down the Virgin's neck, its continuance into the drapery, and then its sudden kick up towards the child, give the design a great deal of its forceful appeal. The Roger van der Weyden 'Deposition' is a superb example of this great master, so poorly represented at the National Gallery. It vibrates with his dramatic passion, held in just restraint by an artist's sense of harmony.

But it is late in the day to fling off passing criticisms of established masters. Let me, therefore, pass over the two brilliant Reynold's, and the still more brilliant Hals and the profound little Rembrandt landscape, and come to grips with less known work and questionable attributions.

The very sincere and able 'Portrait of Martin Behaim' by Hans Leonard Schauflein must inevitably excite interest. A few will recall that the Duke of Devonshire lent a work by this painter, 'The Wheel of Fortune,' to the Burlington Club Exhibition of Early German Art in 1906. The picture displayed a charming landscape background similar in sympathetic rendering to that of the 'Behaim.'

Jan van Scorel is another painter, better known it is true, but still far from a popular figure. He is represented by two admirable, if minor, portraits. He was the student of William Cornelisz (of whom we know nothing certain except that he drank heavily), and afterwards of Jacob Cornelisz, of whose work we have an example in the National Gallery. He worked for a short time with Mabuse. His life, of which we have unusually full detail, has recently been written by M. G. J. Hoogewerff.

Until the National Gallery acquired, in 1922, the 'Portrait of a Man,' I might have counted Lucas van Leyden as unfamiliar to the public. I can now, luckily, content myself with mentioning that Messrs. Agnew show a small portrait of great power and simplicity, an amazingly modern work, which immediately sets us thinking of Daumier.

Johannes Cornelisz Verspranck is the last painter I need deal with in this category of the unfamiliar. His 'Portrait of a Woman' is a masterly piece of painting. He was as satisfied with the surface of things as was ever a Dutchman. He reflected his world and was part of it ever so charmingly: but there was no room there for Rembrandt.

It is impossible, I think, to be satisfied with all the attributions at the exhibition. I am convinced that Rubens never painted the abominable 'Por-



Dramatis Personæ. No. 151.

By 'Quis.'

MR. W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM



trait of a Woman.' The whole face is feebly constructed: there is a sticky under-painting, messily smeared over with a pretty red: the ear is a formless collection of blobs: the shadow behind the neck is meaningless and ill-placed.

Less flagrant, but none the less faulty, I think, is the labelling of two portraits, one of Luther, the other of Katharina van Bora, with the name of Cranach. That delicate, sensitive master never produced such wooden and uninteresting works.

The portrait of Edward VI attributed to Holbein will certainly re-awaken an old controversy. I think it as well, therefore, to set out certain facts in connexion with this portrait, those belonging to the National Portrait and the Victoria and Albert, and others, all of which have the same origin, a drawing in the Royal Collection. This drawing is itself but a doubtful Holbein, and it must be borne in mind that Edward reached the age of six, which is distinctly stated as his age on the portrait, in October, 1543. Holbein died between October 7 and November 29, 1543; which gives very little time, if any, for the portrait to have been done: moreover, Holbein was no slap-dash Van Dyck. The style and colouring of the Portrait Gallery version is distinctly French. No. 32 at Agnew's is so badly repainted that it is impossible to venture an opinion on its origin, but, dates and manner being taken into account, there seems to be absolutely no reason for the attribution to Holbein.

The David, the Veronese and the Tintoretto are all doubtful, a fact which the catalogue admits in the two last cases. Space will not allow me further argument. I must conclude with mention of Antonio Moro's remarkably able portraits of himself and of Mary I (a replica in design of that in the Prado), Lotto's rich 'Lucretia,' the charming but uneven Cuyp portrait, the very beautiful early Giovanni Bellini, and the Turner 'Castle of Rosenau.'

The New English Art Club.  
Spring Gardens Gallery, Trafalgar Square.

It is to be regretted that this notice of the New English has been so delayed, and is now cramped into so small a space.

The work, as usual, displays a decent range, a catholicity which never degenerates into licence. On the one hand, three distinguished works by the late Mr. Sargent give the exhibition, even in the eyes of the most artistically conservative, a respectability which is not purchased at any cost; on the other, the work of such pioneers among the younger men as Mr. Paul Nash and Mr. Roberts evidence its continued protest against academic stagnation. Mr. Steer is fortunately not absent, and two works by this great artist, 'The Severn from Painswick Beacon' and 'Haresfield Beacon,' are alone justifications of the Show. Sir Charles Holmes's 'Bleasdale Moor' is a wonderfully firm and intricate piece of work, and once more reaffirms the persistence of his modern and artistic individuality in spite of his accumulation of scholarship and his continual hob-nobbing with the old masters. But I must resist the temptation to make a brief abstract of the catalogue, since it must be too brief to be just.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### ARMS AND A MOOR

[FROM MRS. EDGAR DUGDALE]

EVENTS in Morocco are giving piquancy to the Conference of the League of Nations now sitting in Geneva to draw up regulations for controlling the traffic in arms and munitions. Part of the plan is to prohibit, by means of an International Convention to be signed by all States, the export of war-material except under Government licence.

The French must find the Geneva discussions of particularly topical importance. They are unexpectedly engaged in a tough struggle with the mountain tribesmen of the Rif, who, hot with recent triumphs over the Spaniards, have made an unprovoked descent across the frontier that separates the French and Spanish zones in Morocco. Such inroads have not been unknown in the history of our own Colonial Empire, and indeed the whole question of trade in arms is one that particularly affects nations who, like the British and the French, are responsible for the peace and security of millions of natives.

Peace and security are the best gifts that French rule has brought to the Moors in their zone. Their conquest of the centre and south, and their subsequent pacification of the country are mainly due to the genius of Marshal Lyautey, one of the most skilful military leaders in native warfare, and humane and resourceful administrators that a colonizing Power ever produced.

He is still Governor of French Morocco. Under him the country has been opened up by construction of a system of good motor roads, over which for some years past merchandise has been exported and tourists imported. But now once more the rumble of artillery wheels up to the line where French rule ends and Spanish suzerainty theoretically begins. Spain however, even before her recent disasters in Northern Morocco, had never imposed her will effectively upon the hill-men of the Rif. This block of mountains is a virtually impregnable natural fortress. Lyautey said some months ago that France had no desire to carry her arms into those glens, and he is reported to have added that 150,000 men would not be too many for such a job. We may safely believe that responsibility for the present clash between the tribes and the French lies with the Rifi's own leader.

This brings us to the other interesting personality in the present act of the Moroccan drama. Abdel Krim is no savage chief, but well educated, a lawyer by trade, much better acquainted with civilization than many of the Highland chiefs in Jacobite days.

Indeed to judge by an interview which he gave to the special correspondent of the *Irish Times* not long ago, the shibboleths of post-war foreign politics trip as easily off his tongue as if he had been trained by the Supreme Council itself. "Our struggle" (with Spain) "is exclusively national," said he, and went on to disclaim all intention to make an enemy of France (this was in January last), and although he disputed the present frontier of the French zone he suggested that it should be altered presently by decision of a Frontier Commission at an "inevitable Peace Conference."

All this sounds sensible as well as familiar, and when we read accounts of the military defences of the said frontier in that same January, Abdel Krim's then policy seems as prudent as it was reasonable. For the French military posts on the hill-tops over against the southern wall of the Rif Mountains were already mounted with "seventy-fives." The French were taking no avoidable risks. However they do not seem to have expected the appearance of Rifi tribesmen in the Wergha valley in such force as we have now heard of. The question of how they got through the line of posts is not nearly as interesting as the problem of why they came through. For after all big guns on the hills will

never deter a man, or even large numbers of men, from walking down into the plains along the woody bottoms of their native glens.

But what can have caused Abdel Krim to alter his expressed intention of keeping peace with France? "Our struggle is exclusively national, our only enemy is Spain." When he said this to the man from the *Irish Times* he was somewhere near Albuemas Bay, on the northern coast plain in territory that had been Spanish. Did he repeat it to himself a little later looking southward towards the Great Atlas ranges? And if so did the words find any echo among the tribes of the plains, or among the feudal chiefs in their castles above the passes beyond which are the deserts?

All this is at present merest speculation. Nor does the fact that Abdel Krim's followers call him Sultan Mohammed the First count for very much. But the situation has unknown quantities that make it worth watching. The political surface of three Continents is cooling very slowly after the upheaval of the Great War, and the crust on top of the Islamic countries is hardly set. A very little movement from below might open a very long crack.

In any case we feel sympathetic for the French, who are forced to fresh expenditure of money and men for a defensive war. There is no reason to doubt the final issue, but the cost and length of the campaign will of course depend on Abdel Krim's resources for carrying on a guerilla war by his own people, or conceivably for arming any adherents he may gain among the tribes in French Morocco.

That brings us back to the point from which we started, namely the need for international control of the trade in arms and munitions by agreement between all civilized Governments. Abdel Krim is in possession of a certain amount of war material, part of it taken from the Spaniards, but the question of supply of munitions remains, and at present there is no legislation to prevent any private manufacturer of arms in any country from fulfilling any orders the Moor may be able to place.

Whatever opinions we may have about the right solution of the problems that arise out of the present partition of Morocco we shall all agree that a dragging war between the tribes and the troops of a European Power, be it France, or be it Spain, is the very worst road to a satisfactory final settlement.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

\* The Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW welcomes the free expression in these columns of genuine opinion on matters of public interest, although he disclaims responsibility alike for the opinions themselves and the manner of their expression.

\* Letters which are of reasonable brevity, and are signed with the writer's name, are more likely to be published than long and anonymous communications.

\* Letters on topical subjects, intended for publication the same week, should reach us by the first post on Wednesday.

### DECADENT PLAYS

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW

SIR,—Having seen your footnote to my letter on the subject of decadent plays in your last week's issue, I read Mr. Ivor Brown's clever article entitled 'Much Ado About Noel' with considerable interest. There again 'Fallen Angels' admits of no further criticism on my part than to say quite truthfully: "Ask the Box Office." There can be no question as to Mr. Noel Coward's very great ability either as a master of stagecraft, dramatic author, or actor—at any rate in the part he is now playing in 'The Vortex.'

The scene which brings down the curtain on the second act, with his mad attack on the piano during his mother's painful episode with her juvenile lover is nothing short of a dramatic masterpiece. Whether it does harm or not from a moral point of view is quite a debatable question. Personally I am inclined to think

it may have an influence for good on many an elderly married mother who may be contemplating the expensive luxury of running a young lover.

Mr. A. Greville Collins writing in last Wednesday's *Daily Mail* quotes Miss Grace Edwin who contends that "the authors of laughter are greater than those of tears"; and what a tragedy it would be if authors were encouraged to write only laughter-causing plays, but he mentions that Shelley says "The sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought." This may have been all very well in the good old days before the war, but now things are changed and we don't want to be made more miserable than we can help. We want to be happy and we can't be happy unless . . . well, for the rest: see 'No, No, Nanette.'

No manager in his senses should ever dream of putting on a gloomy play—not even 'Macbeth' or 'East Lynne'—if he wants to make a financial success. Therefore, I repeat that nowadays, plays are written to make laughter or to shock us.

I am, etc.,

"FIRST NIGHTER"

### THE PRIME MINISTER ON ART

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW

SIR,—At the Dinner of the Artists' General Benevolent Institution Mr. Baldwin is reported in *The Times* of May 7 to have said:

One of the great difficulties always seemed to him, an outsider knowing nothing of these matters, to be that there had been worked up an entirely fictitious value in the pictures of the dead. When a very rich man wanted to invest money in pictures, he desired to invest in something that would not lose its value, and as long as dealers would keep up the value of certain old masters he knew he was safe. If he wanted to buy a modern work of art he had to exercise his own judgment, and if his judgment was wrong he lost his money.

I have heard other people murmur this sort of thing, but the Prime Minister has said it very much aloud. Does he not really know that great works of art are cheap at any price? Anyone who thinks for a moment can realize that. There is no price too high for masterpieces.

"Fictitious value!" If a man is not rich enough to buy for himself the greatest works of art, he must go without having them in his own private house and be content to see them at his national galleries. He is part-owner of them there, at any rate, and should be thankful. A man who loves works of art and wishes to own them himself—and he who buys them does love them, this I know—may not be able to buy "the works of those who have stood the test of ages" and "have a claim to that veneration and esteem to which no modern can pretend," yet he will get lovely things. He will instinctively collect the works of his contemporaries, as the founders of many of the greatest historical collections did before him. Should he "with the gifts of the gods upon him" have fine taste, they will be entirely desirable to others who share his rare sense.

I have known two men who gambled in pictures in the way Mr. Baldwin evidently has in his mind. They both came awful croppers when they put their ridiculous collections on the market, and serve them both right, for how dare they put their feet on holy ground?

I am, etc.,

London, W.1

WALTER DOWDESWELL

### IRELAND

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW

SIR,—A recent number of the SATURDAY REVIEW contained a review of a book entitled 'The Real Ireland' in which I read the following:

He comes to the conclusion that there is not the least sign that Ireland will ever settle down and become a civilized country.

The supreme test of civilization is the manners of a people, and judged by others the Irish, with their natural, kindly, sympathetic manners, are more civilized than the English. As to "settling down," it seems to me that Ireland, in view of her history, is wonderfully settled down. For centuries, then, the English pursued the policy of *Divide et impera*, creating division and faction all over the country. Was it to be supposed that the establishment of a native government would put an end to this overnight, as it were?

Give Ireland a chance. Instead of carping at her, encourage her. That is the generous policy, and, I believe I may add, the wise one.

I am, etc.,

New York

AN AMERICAN READER

## BAN ON GERMAN LAWN TENNIS PLAYERS

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW

SIR,—We are just sending out a British lawn tennis team to Warsaw to compete in the first round of the Davis Cup. Poland is within the comity of nations, but Germany seemingly is not. Why this differentiation against Germany six years after the Peace was signed? Thousands of German-Poles in the German Army fought against us on the Western Front and must have killed numbers of our men. It should also be remembered that the leading Polish military figures in what is now independent Poland likewise fought with the Germans and Austrians against our Allies on the Eastern Front: e.g. Marshal Pilsudski, General Haller, General Szeptycki and others—Pilsudski's Polish Legionaries actually marched with the triumphant German Army into Warsaw when the Russians were driven out in August, 1915.

Hence there would seem to be no reason, on war grounds, why international lawn tennis players should be deprived of the chance of meeting German players such as Rahe, Froitzheim, Kreuzer and others, whom we all found to be such good and fine sportsmen before the war. Otto Froitzheim—surely one of the most graceful players of all time—can at least be guilty of no "war crime" for as he was returning from America in August, 1914, he was captured and interned at Gibraltar.

Is it not time that this ridiculous ban on the German players should be lifted?

I am, etc.,

"TOURNEBROCHE"

## "PAUPER'S PIE"

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW

SIR,—I am editing and am generally responsible for a new publication coming from the address below, and bearing the above title, something after the idea of Queen Alexandra's gift book on behalf of the unemployed, published some years ago, in order to try to solve to some extent the problem of Pauperism. I shall be most grateful for any assistance in this direction and for contributions, literary and artistic, both from the staff of the SATURDAY REVIEW and any who would care to volunteer and help on the good work.

I am, etc.,

ROBERT BIRKMYRE

Chelsea Workhouse,  
2a Arthur Street, S.W.

## VIENNA SUMMER SCHOOL

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW

SIR,—The Vienna International Summer School will hold its fourth session from September 1 to 24.

The object of the school is to convey a knowledge of international achievements and to foster a mutual understanding of European problems. The subjects of the lectures range over history, philosophy, literature, art and music, politics, sociology, economics and law, and include a special set of lectures on Central Europe past and present. The lectures will be delivered by eminent men from all the European countries, in English, French and German, and there will be conducted tours, excursions and social events.

From July 1 to September 30, vacation German language courses will be given by approved teachers under the auspices of the Vienna Committee: the syllabus is arranged to meet the needs of both beginners and advanced. The school is open to all, and a hearty welcome in Vienna is assured to every member. The journey takes thirty-six hours and the fare is about £13 return: board and lodging can be obtained at from £7 per month. All further information to be had from the Hon. Secretary, Dr. G. Tugendhat, London School of Economics, Houghton Street, London, W.C.2.

I am, etc.,

W. H. BEVERIDGE,

Chairman of the British Advisory Committee.

## Y.W.C.A.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW

SIR,—We shall be grateful if through the medium of your paper we may commend to the women of London the special appeal for a Y.W.C.A. Central Club Building. The primary design of the club is to meet the needs and promote the welfare and happiness of this army of girls and women who are working in London in business and the professions. It will be conducted on a broad and comprehensive basis and incidentally will serve many useful purposes not only for girls living away from home in London but for strangers arriving from the provinces and other countries. Such a central Club is found in many cities of America and the Dominions, and in London it is long overdue.

The scheme has the support of many of the most important firms, whose staffs are enthusiastically helping, and the fact that these girls themselves have collected £6,600 during the past year is sufficient expression of their consciousness of the need of the centre. The business girls now formed into groups are circularizing by letter the various branches of the Banks, Insurance Offices, Government Offices, large shops, etc., which they represent, asking for the co-operation of every girl in raising their share of the amount needed to build the club. During the next three months the women in most of the boroughs of London will be asked for contributions to raise £50,000 (£23,000 has already been raised). The campaign will start on May 18.

(Signed) Chairman, EDITH L. SELBY-BIGGE, O.B.E.  
Chairman, CICELEY HORNEY (Chelsea Committee)

" A. STANHOPE (Kensington Committee)

" FRANCES, LADY DE L'ISLE  
(Paddington Committee)

" N. NORTHBROOK (St. Marylebone Committee)

" HELEN BUCKNILL  
(Mayoress of Westminster;  
Westminster Committee)

Blue Triangle Forward Movement,

26 George Street, Hanover Square, W.1

Several letters are held over owing to lack of space.



## NEW FICTION

By GERALD BULLETT

*Day of Atonement.* By Louis Golding. Chatto. 7s. 6d. net.*The Half-Loaf.* By Agnes Mure Mackenzie. Heinemann. 7s. 6d. net.*Bring! Bring!* By Conrad Aiken. Secker. 7s. 6d. net.*The Viaduct Murder.* By Ronald A. Knox. Methuen. 7s. 6d. net.

MR. LOUIS GOLDING'S new novel is not only the best that he has given us: it is one of the most satisfying and impressive novels of recent years. Its cumulative effect is so considerable that, having just laid the book down, I find myself singularly reluctant to attempt the prosaic task of criticism. Mr. Golding's theme is magnificently ambitious. It is one of those themes which, presenting great and obvious opportunities, are eagerly seized upon by the enthusiastic amateur, who, as one would expect, promptly makes a mess of them. Perhaps it is because so many messes have been made that modern intellectuals, afraid of the obvious sublime, are tending more and more to exploit the psychological interest of the trivial. Comic disillusionment is the literary vogue; and the perennial commonplace emotions of humanity—love and hate and religion—are already regarded, by the Dot and Dash School of Fiction, as decidedly *vieux jeu*. If this very healthy reaction from sentimentality goes too far, the novel-reader will have nothing left for his entertainment but bad novels full of sentiment and clever novels full of arid psychology. That is why I feel it to be a piece of rare luck that Mr. Louis Golding, who is as clever a writer as the next man, should have dared to write such a story as this.

It is the story of Leah and Eli, two Russian Jews, and of their son Reuben. The first half occurs in Russia, the second half in the North of England; and the whole is admirably set in the framework of a Prologue-Epilogue of which Sicily is the scene. On the twelfth of October, the most important day in the Jewish Calendar, the narrator happens upon one whom he takes to be a Sicilian goatherd. He is living with a dark-eyed woman who might have been "a maenad out of Thessaly," and his half-naked children run "like slim ghosts among the roots of his olives." This supposed Sicilian is Reuben, who has turned his back upon the dark gods of his childhood and pledged himself to a kindly paganism. There follows the tale of his ill-fated parents, a tale which, incidentally, affords as fascinating a glimpse into the personal and social life of orthodox Jewry as one is likely to get. Mr. Golding writes of what he intimately knows and as intimately feels; and both knowledge and emotion are communicated to us, confidently, easily, in a book that moves with unflinching inspiration from its brilliant opening to its tragic close. Leah, daughter of Serra Golda, is a young and lovely girl in whom the torrents of spring are irresistibly rising. Betrayed into minor acts of sensuality, she is swept by the force of her reaction into a life of the most austere piety. When her spiritual purgation has been effected, and the ghost of her sin laid, she is wooed by young Eli, a learned student of the scriptures. The community is decimated by a pogrom, and the young couple take refuge in England. Here Eli, finding no market for his learning, becomes a carpenter. Reuben is born, and the three live together very happily, in spite of their poverty. With Eli's conversion to Christianity begins the tragedy that culminates in the apostate's invasion of the synagogue, on the sacred Day of Atonement, to preach Christ. Mr. Golding treads in these difficult places with an extraordinarily sure foot; but not even he can hold beyond a certain point one's interest in the psychology of religious fanaticism. After the conversion, both Eli and Leah become almost depersonalized, and one's interest naturally gravitates to Reuben, the

child. So, with unobtrusive artistry, we are led back to the point from which we started. The wheel has come full circle. Throughout, with but the rarest lapses, Mr. Golding proves himself master of his craft. He has not been afraid to sound the deep notes of tragedy; he has not disdained to spend his imaginative sympathy upon these naïve but noble creatures. If my account of the story suggests melodrama, that is because melodrama is inherent in the subject. Under Mr. Golding's restrained touch the four or five tragic scenes that recur to the mind move with memorable dignity. One chapter in particular, in which Eli breaks to Leah the news of his conversion, is a little masterpiece of poignant drama.

Miss Agnes Mure Mackenzie's talent is in danger of being overlooked by reason of its very exquisiteness, for the times are not propitious for the recognition of an art that conceals itself so modestly as hers does. 'The Half-Loaf,' her second novel, and within its narrow limits an almost perfect thing, is remarkable for no surface brilliance; the story is simple in the extreme and has been told a hundred times before; the style is smooth, precise, straightforward, never calling attention to itself. The quality of the book resides in the perfect harmony between narrative and narration, its delicate flavour of pastiche, the fresh charm of its Victorian atmosphere. To read it is like listening, half-amused, half-wistful, wholly sympathetic, to an old tune played on our grandmother's spinet. On the wings of this tune—a minuet, perhaps—we are wafted into a world that is slightly and delightfully antiquated. The women wear crinolines and are bitterly ashamed, as dear Olivia was, if they have been kissed lightly on the cheek by a man whose intentions were not matrimonial. The men do not hesitate on occasion to speak without apology of their "honour," a sentiment for which they will readily face death. And a married couple, however estranged, religiously sleep side by side, for it would be the height of immorality, one infers, for them to occupy separate beds. Fashions in conduct, no less than fashions in dress, are continually changing; crinolines and prudery are already invested with something of the glamour of antiquity. Miss Mackenzie is so completely at home in this world of stiff gallantry and priggish heroism that one is almost tempted to forget that she is herself a modern. I confess that, as the story proceeded, I began to feel alarm lest she should ruin all by some culminating triteness. There seemed but two ways of ending, both highly unsatisfactory. But Miss Mackenzie chose a third way, which could not have been foreseen, and so provided me with a shock of pleasure and filled me with admiration for her austere artistry.

Mr. Conrad Aiken presents us with a packet of intellectual fireworks, every one of which is guaranteed to go off in a brilliant cascade of sound and colour. In plain English, he has written an excellent first volume of tales. Not every one of them is entirely satisfactory, but every one yields enjoyment and commands respect. Mr. Aiken's prose is extremely vivid and exciting; his characterization is shrewd; he has a rich vein of poetry in him. My only complaint is that a man capable of writing so masterly a tale as 'The Disciple' should content himself so often with the mere dissection of mood and character. However, if wit, irony, bizarre fancy, poetic imagination, and excellent prose possess any attractions for you, 'Bring! Bring!' is certainly the book for your money.

'The Viaduct Murder' is something of a disappointment. It is wittily written; the author's asides are entertaining; but in no other respect is it an improvement on the average goodish detective tale. By a series of elaborate deductions, put into the mouth of the amateur detective, we are persuaded to accept a totally false theory, the truth of the matter being very simple or obvious. To pretend to an inordinate appetite for detective stories is now the very latest thing among highbrows of the Anti-Highbrow School. This book is therefore sure of a warm welcome.

## REVIEWS

## MARGOT ASQUITH

*Places and Persons.* By Margot Asquith (Countess of Oxford and Asquith). Thornton Butterworth. 21s. net.

THE publishers of this book have done well to put "Margot Asquith" as the author's name on the cover, and to relegate her new title to the inside, to small type and to brackets. For she belongs to that minute and enviable class of persons to whom popular favour has accorded the accolade of the Christian name: a class above external dignities: the class of national figures.

Written by anybody else, the book would have seemed incoherent, for it has the oddest possible plan: there are five sections, the first dealing with a journey to Egypt in 1891; the next three with America, Spain and Italy in 1922, 1923 and 1924 respectively; the fifth and last with 'Life as I See It, 1925.' But 'Life as I See it' might have served for the general title, and the "I" of 1925 is indistinguishable from the "I" of 1891—as lively, as erratic, as generous, as frank, and at least as young. The little personal sketches have the same brightness first as last. One never feels that they are necessarily just (is any human being in a position to be just to any other?), but always that they are illuminating. They illuminate the portrayer as well as the portrayed; sometimes indeed she emphasizes the fact for us:

Mr. Milner called and took us to a mosque at 10.30. I like to talk to him, though he makes me feel a little too dependent on information to talk really well. Arthur Balfour has precisely the opposite effect. The fact is, I do not know enough, and all the imaginative insight in the world will not serve instead of knowledge to eighty out of a hundred people.

Could self-revelation be more artless—or more artistic?

Some of the early judgments, left unchanged since they were first recorded, have received a striking commentary from the passage of time—for instance, this: Colonel Kitchener is a man of energy and ambition, a little complacent over his defects, he has not got an interesting mind.

And this, of John Morley:

He looks at life from a height, quietly, objectively, and a little greyly. His philosophy steps in between him and political power. He lacks faith. There is a thin veil between his principles and his personality. One knows—without asking why—that he will never be Prime Minister.

The writer is, of course, an egoist. If she were not, she would not want to write her reminiscences, and we should not want to read them. An author must care for her subject. But here the word "egoist" is a term of praise. Mrs. Asquith (we ought to say "the Countess of Oxford and Asquith," but it is so difficult!) is no more generously indulgent to her own personality than to others: her feelings flow out spontaneously towards herself and the world: most egoists are vain, but in her the absence of vanity is startling and presumably unique. She is delighted with her gifts, but not "complacent over her defects." She records her tears, her failures, her mistakes, with the same energetic candour as her successes. One realizes that, if she hurts other people's feelings by her comments, it is because she is unable to credit them with that pathetic wound-nursing self-love, so human and so general, from which she herself is wholly free. When she says:

Everything in life that I have cared for I have done pretty well. There are two things which, had I cared for, I think I would have done very well: writing and speaking—one feels that she means simply that: when she says: "I have said too many foolish things in the course of my life to resent impromptus," one feels that she means that too.

The comments on American conditions, and especially on the failure of Prohibition, and the account of a conversation with Mussolini, are the things of greatest public interest in the volume: but the jottings about family and home are the best.

## A CURIOSITY OF POLITICS

*Robert Owen.* By G. D. H. Cole. Benn. 15s. net.

ROBERT OWEN was an extraordinarily interesting character, but he kept nevertheless whole swarms of bees in his bonnet and it would not be hard to make his biography an admirably painstaking and thoroughly dull performance. Mr. Cole has achieved the ideal—now, fortunately, becoming more general—of making his subject live and his biography interesting without calling in a wearisome array of documents at every turn. Owen's career was in fact sufficiently eventful to make his life-story as fascinating as a good novel. He was usher of his school at the age of seven, went to London to make his fortune at ten, set up as an employer at eighteen, and before he reached twenty had secured an appointment as manager of a brand-new cotton mill employing about five hundred hands.

His theories of education and what may be described as the sublimation of workhouses are profoundly interesting even at the present day, and he was the source of more movements and more potent aspirations than perhaps any other man of his generation. He never became quite a prig, but sometimes lapsed quaintly near the borderline. Mr. Cole pleads for a fairer appreciation of Owen's ideas and activities, rightly discounting the follies of his dotage, which have been dwelt upon out of all proportion to their relative importance in his career.

'Robert Owen,' which nobody could find dull, is the first of a new biographical series, edited by Mr. Philip Guedalla, entitled, 'Curiosities of Politics.' Except for the type, which is inconveniently small and trying, it promises to be an altogether admirable series and will include volumes on Parnell, George IV, Palmerston, and Disraeli.

## THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF THE KINEMA

*The Cinema in Education.* Edited by Sir James Marchant. Allen and Unwin. 7s. 6d. net.

AS long ago as 1913 the National Council of Public Morals was actively interested in the kinema, but it was not till the end of 1916 that, at the unanimous request of the cinematograph trade, the Council set

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up a Commission which was among other things to inquire into the physical, social, educational and moral influences of the kinema with special reference to young people. The scope of the inquiry was wide and the Committee which undertook it both representative and authoritative. The result of its labours are embodied in this volume.

First it must be said that the report of the Committee which is signed by Professor Charles Spearman, the Chairman, Professor Cyril Burt, the Secretary, and Mr. S. J. F. Philpott, the investigator, is an invaluable document. Obviously it owes a great deal to its editor, Sir James Marchant, the General Secretary to the Council. In what is described as a "foreword," Sir James reminds us that one of the principles upon which the Council conducts its operations is to win the sympathy of the men and women who are writing our books and newspapers, or running our public amusements, and thus have under their control the means of instantly and effectively reaching millions of people. It must be confessed that this principle has been departed from in the report and the work of the Committee will therefore fail to have the full effect due to its importance. The defect of all such efforts is that few people read them. The results of the inquiry should have been handed over to a skilful man of letters to present in an attractive form. The chapters, as arranged, are a series of analyses and tables which could well have been given at the end of such an essay for those who desired to scrutinize the evidence; writers, reviewers, journalists and the intelligent public are for the most part busy people and should be spared all trouble. What is wanted is propaganda without tears.

The kinema has certainly a great opportunity—and an immense responsibility. Sir James tells us:

The entire population of the country visits picture shows once each fortnight. . . . In thickly populated areas some ninety per cent. of the school population from eight to fourteen years of age frequent this form of entertainment.

The basis of the report is a comparison of the durability of impressions produced by many pictures compared with normal educational methods. There can be little doubt of the value of the kinema in education. This is realized in other countries if not here. New York has a director of visual education and its Board of Education is engaged in equipping the schools, ten at a time, with kinema installation; France proposes introducing "this marvellous educational instrument" into every type of school. Some Dutch towns have installed rate-aided picture-houses for school children; Sweden, Denmark, New Zealand and many States in the United States have already established and are engaged in increasing teaching by cinematograph in their schools.

#### HIPPOPOTAMI IN PEN AND PENCIL

*Hokusai.* By Yone Noguchi. With 22 illustrations. Elkin Matthews.

MR. NOGUCHI'S book is surely an amazing production. It is an outpouring of rapture which in a Western would be idiotic, but which in the Japanese poet somehow is not. There is scholarship in the work, but it is most airily skimmed over; in place of our footnotes with laborious references, Mr. Noguchi runs on with "it is said," or "they tell me," or "some critic somewhere says." There is a great deal of penetrating criticism, but it hides its grim face behind the hearty mask of rapture. There are a number of whimsical, keenly told anecdotes, which may or may not be true—perhaps Mr. Noguchi does not very much mind—but which certainly give us a vivid and intriguing portrait of the Old Man Mad About Drawing. We also get a portrait of Mr. Noguchi in his "room of eight mats," seeing visions of Balzac "whose large eyes stare on the boiling coffee pot through the increasing silence of night toward the heart of Paris," and visions of Rodin,

with a rustic nose; and how, Mr. Noguchi exclaims, "The knot in the middle of his nose distinguishes itself in his face." Why this very Japanese person should think of Balzac and Rodin in connexion with Hokusai, he does not explain. It does not seem to matter. It is an associative poetical vision of bigness. It is in the spirit which makes him burst out:

Oh, what is he, if he is not a machine set in the bookshop or printer's factory? Hokusai is an artistic hippopotamus. Hokusai is an incomparable mammoth. . . . Like a clock with a mad pendulum, he drew the pictures with the speed of a hurricane or thunderstorm.

On he goes in a crescendo of enthusiasm, carrying himself forward again and again with "I love you, Hokusai," or "Hokusai, you are great," until at last he discovers "Hokusai, I call you 'Artist of Living Pictures,'" and this refrain he repeats at the opening of each paragraph, and in the middle of many, until his lyrical last chapter sinks exhausted with emphasis.

All this is very refreshing and stimulating. We do not wish that the European critics should get up to such fantastic capers. They would be ridiculous, because they would feel ridiculous. Mr. Noguchi is far too simple to feel ridiculous, and his simple, un-supple English gives his work the sublime seriousness of a child. Oh Mr. Noguchi, you are a critical hippopotamus.

#### SCIENCE AND RELIGION

*Science and Religion.* By J. Arthur Thomson. Methuen. 7s. 6d. net.

IT is no doubt a sign of the times that a man of science should nowadays be selected to deliver such courses of lectures as were till recently the remunerative prerogative of divines. This thoughtful and interesting discussion of the relations between science and religion contains six lectures delivered last year on the Morse Foundation of the Union Theological Seminary in New York. Professor Thomson was left "quite



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OUR FOREFATHERS bartered and enjoyed the combination of adventure with simple bargains. To-day faced instead with a rate of exchange, the average man is at the mercy of influences which, so far as he is concerned, are speculative. Unaided by good fortune, he is unlikely to secure the most favourable terms, whether he is changing his travelling cheques or is concerned with larger business affairs. In all matters involving foreign money, he is invited to consult the Westminster Bank either through its London offices or its branches. He may be sure always of receiving careful advice and ready assistance.

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unfettered" by the trustees—all who know him are well aware that he would not have accepted the task on any other terms. It is rather unfortunate that he should observe in his preface that his aim has been "to show with concreteness and circumstantiality that modern scientific formulation in terms of the Lowest Common Denominators cannot be regarded as anti-thetic to religious interpretation in terms of the Greatest Common Measure." Such a beginning inclines the reader to expect a work to which might be justly applied the lines of Henry More:

A lecture strange he seem'd to read to me;  
And though I did not rightly understand  
His meaning, yet I deem'd it to be  
Some goodly thing.

But the metaphysical mist through which a man can see no further than he can throw a stone, so wisely dear to the old-fashioned Bampton Lecturer, is fortunately absent from most of Professor Thomson's pages. He begins rightly enough with an attempt at definition of his terms. Science is "a kind of knowledge reached by recognized methods of observation and experiment, registration and measurement." Religion is, alas! "difficult to define," and the lecturer has not managed to crystallize it in a formula. But it is very clear that he knows and feels what it is. Perhaps the best criticism of his results lies in the fine quotation that he makes from Sir Thomas Browne: "There are two Books from whence I collect my Divinity: besides that written one of God, another of His servant Nature, that universal and publick Manuscript that lies expans'd unto the Eyes of all: those that never saw Him in the one, have discovered Him in the other." Like the old physician of Norwich, Professor Thomson has an occasional tendency to lose himself in a mystery, to pursue his reason to an *O altitudo!* But all that he says is worth reading.

### CHESS FOR BEGINNERS

*The Elements of Chess.* By J. du Mont.

MR. JOHNSON regretted that he had never learnt to play at cards. A man of his intelligence, one would have thought, could have learnt the names of the suits and all the mysteries of Ombre in an evening. Some have had cause to wish they had never learnt to know clubs from spades; but who ever regretted learning to play chess? "Man," says Carlyle, "is created to fight." Now, chess is the image of war: hence the joy it affords. We feel the rapture of the strife without the bloodshed.

All who help to spread the knowledge and practice of chess may be regarded as benefactors of mankind. Mr. du Mont's book should enable anyone to get a good knowledge of the game. The rudiments are thoroughly explained. There are two specimen games with every move annotated—most useful this. Chapter 6 contains nineteen short games, beginning with the two-move Fool's Mate. (No. 3, in four moves, is the Scholar's Mate).

Chapter 8 contains other well-annotated games, the last of them, however curious, scarcely in place in a book for beginners. And is it necessary to devote nine pages to a description of the moves, which can be learnt from a chess-playing friend over the board in half-an-hour or less?

There is no good reason for advising an inexperienced player to avoid an opening because it leads, or may lead, to complications. A beginner should not make it his object to win, but rather to gain experience and skill as quickly as possible.

### ACROSTICS

To allow increased space for Answers to Correspondents, the Rules for the Acrostic Competition will in future be on occasion omitted. They will, however, always appear at least once a month.

#### ACROSTIC No. 167.

(First of the Quarter.)

FOES TO THE PILGRIM IN THE PATH HE TROD

FROM THIS WORLD TO THE KINGDOM OF HIS GOD.

1. "It holds, you see!" "But only by a fluke!"
2. A king thus journeys when he's styled a duke.
3. If wrath you must appease, let yours be mild.
4. Hers to protect and tend the helpless child.
5. Great Roman generals thought this honour ample.
6. Of these that pest the house-fly's an example.
7. Equipt with it Sir Joshua we discern.
8. Aided by me you dry-shod cross the burn.
9. Adds bulk, at least, to many a magazine.
10. A fruit: Young Thomas must vacate the scene.
11. This complication let who will unravel.
12. Serves the convenience of folk who travel.

#### DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 165.

(Twelfth of the Quarter.)

TWO FIERY MOUNTAINS OF THE MIDDLE SEA.

1. The blood-stained bane of hapless mortals he.
2. I'm like a whale,—I can't dispense with blowing.
3. Is not to him much household comfort owing?
4. A land curtail to which we often go.
5. Endured by those who find proceedings slow.
6. Reverse a roughly manufactured shoe.
7. Curtail a mount where Israel thousands slew.
8. A wealthy, evil, churlish, drunken fool.
9. Lop at both ends the fly-flap of a mule.

#### Solution to Acrostic No. 165.

M	ar	S <sup>1</sup>	1 Iliad, v. 31.	Ares, Ares, blood-stained
O	rganis	T	bane of mortals."	(Dr. W. Leaf's
U	pholstere	R	translation).	
N		Od	3 Judges iv. 14-16.	
T	ediu	M	3 1 Sam. xxv. 2, 3, 25, 36.	
E	ugor	B		
T	ab	Or <sup>2</sup>		
N	aba	L <sup>3</sup>		
		Il		

ACROSTIC No. 165.—The winner is Mrs. Fardell, 16 Brechin Place, S.W.7, who has selected as her prize 'Through East Anglia,' by Gordon Home, published by Dent and reviewed in our columns on May 2. Eleven other competitors chose this book, 26 named 'Some Men and Women,' 23 'The Golden Keys,' 12 'British Birds,' etc., etc.

Correct solutions were also received from T. E. Thomas, Doric, Iago, Zyk, A. R. N. Cowper-Coles, Lady Duff, Beechworth, Sisypheus, Miss Kelly, N. O. Sellam, Carlton, Quis, Rho Kappa, J. Chambers, G. M. Fowler, G. W. Miller, Lady Diana King, Cory, Vixen, J. R. Crofts, Mrs. J. Butler, Yewden, Miss Sylvia M. Groves, H. M. Vaughan, C. A. S., Borydke, Farsdon, L. M. Maxwell, East Sheen, Barberry, H. de R. Morgan, Agamemnon, Maud Crowther, J. R. Cripps, A. M. W. Maxwell, Peter, Margaret, Old Mancunian, St. Ives, Lady Mottram, R. Ransom, Boskerris, Twyford, Met, Mrs. Haldane Porter, Hon. R. G. Talbot, C. J. Warden, Jay, Gay, Lilian, Baitho, Trasque, Hanworth, Carrie, A. de V. Balthway, Dolmar, Miss Vera Hope, Baldersby, J. Doman Turner, Glamis, Miss Carter, Ida Wild, M. Story, Tyro, Bolo, and Zoozoo.

ONE LIGHT WRONG.—Jeff, Ceyx, F. D. Leeper, Gladys P. Lamont, D. L., C. H. Burton, Rev. E. P. Gatty, Oakapple, J. Sutton, M. I. R., F. H. Cumberlege, Igidie, F. M. Petty, Reginald Eccles, Dodeka, A. B., M. East, and Still Waters.

TWO LIGHTS WRONG.—The Pelhams, M. A. S. McFarlane, F. Sheridan Lea, Stucco, and J. Lennie. All others more.

TYRO.—Accidentally omitted from "One Light wrong" list, No. 163. Very sorry.

IAGO.—Arrived late; acknowledged last week.

ACROSTIC No. 164.—One Light wrong: Peter. Two Lights wrong: F. Sheridan Lea, G. M. Fowler.

OLD MANCUNIAN.—I never treat part of a word as though it were a whole word—never ignore one or more letters. *Pinion* is a wing, but *opinion* is not. If the letters B . . A are wanted for a Light, I shall never instruct you to "curtail a rodent," and then give Brat as the answer.

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## MOTORING

### ELECTRIC BATTERIES

By H. THORNTON RUTTER

SO many motor-cars are making their first trip in the hands of new owners at this season that a word of warning in regard to the electric battery may be of service. Few cars have these accumulators of electricity in such positions that the driver sees the battery and so is reminded that it may require attention. Distilled water has to be added to the cells if the plates are not covered by at least half an inch of the electrolyte, the cable terminals and connexions greased to prevent their being incrustated with corrosive sulphate by electrolysis, and while the car is running to allow the dynamo to give them a charge of current. Some motorists are afraid of overcharging the batteries of their car, and it has been suggested that a switch in the dynamo circuit to control the charging is desirable. Actually this would defeat the desired end.

\* \* \*

When the process of charging is complete, a battery actually contains no more electricity than before a current was passed through it. The charging current merely changes the chemical composition of the lead plates. Similarly when the battery is discharged the chemical process is reversed. What is meant by overcharging is charging a battery at too high a rate, or passing too much electricity through it. In practice motor-car batteries which have to operate self-starters are habitually overcharged, this being necessary to cope with the heavy and frequent demand for current by the self-starter. The idea of placing a switch in the dynamo circuit with a view to controlling the charging of the battery would in almost every case result in the

complete ruin of the dynamo; almost every dynamo installed on motor-cars for battery charges is of the shunt-wound variety. It is absolutely imperative that while these dynamos are generating current the battery should be in the circuit with them to keep down the voltage. With the battery not in circuit the dynamo voltage would rise to probably five or six times its normal voltage. This effect may be seen when the lamps are switched on direct to the dynamo with the battery removed. Motorists who have tried this know to their cost that all the lamps thus switched on are immediately burnt out. Should any motorist desire to control the charge of his batteries, the correct method would be to insert a switch in the field circuit of the dynamo. With the dynamo field circuit open the dynamo would then not excite. Owing to the frequent calls made by the self-starter on the battery, and the use of lamps at night while standing, the battery is more often in a state of partial discharge than otherwise, and rather than attempt to restrict the activities of the dynamo, generally speaking, every opportunity should be taken for charging.

\* \* \*

At a recent meeting of the Institution of Automobile Engineers, which closed the session until this autumn, one of the speakers in the discussion that followed the reading of a paper advanced the view that, like a watch, the motor-car ought to be made so trustworthy that access to the engine parts by the user would be unnecessary. Simply supplying lubricant to the working parts needs little expert knowledge, but decarbonizing, valve grinding, tappet adjusting and the like require constant practice to be anything like efficient. That is why it is suggested to the motorist to attend to the battery himself; it requires very little skill or practice to do what is necessary to keep this useful part of the machine in proper working order.

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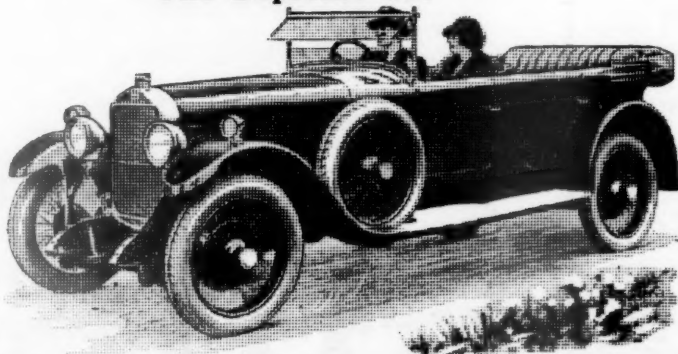
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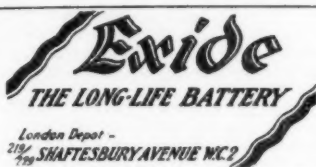




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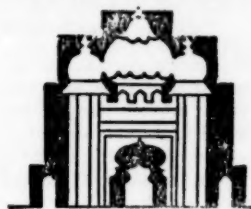
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## Company Meetings

## ODHAMS PRESS

THE FIFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of Odhams Press, Ltd., was held on May 14, at the Hotel Cecil, London.

Lt.-Col. W. Grant Morden, J.P., M.P. (the chairman), said he felt sure the shareholders would be satisfied with the progress made during the past year. The net profit amounted to £102,923, compared with £88,689 in 1923 and £71,144 in 1922. A year ago he stated that *John Bull* had reached a net sale of 800,000. To-day the directors could point to the unique figure of well over 900,000 copies weekly—the largest of any publication of this class in this country, or, indeed, the world. (Applause.) The *Sporting Life* contribution to the total trading profit had also shown a satisfactory increase. Towards the close of last year the directors acquired the copyright and goodwill of *The Sportsman*, and so far the results had well justified the purchase. The Borough Billposting Company had again more than justified itself. The printing department—the unobtrusive foundation upon which the firm was founded—had, in spite of a severe competition, maintained its position in a satisfactory manner. The net profits of the *Ideal Home* for last year almost equalled the total spent on the paper since its foundation. Another publication from which the directors anticipated a substantial contribution in future years was the *Broadcaster*, which had been converted into a trade journal with every prospect of great success. Early in 1924 the company purchased the shares in *Coming Fashions*, Ltd., the proprietors of a paper of that name with a very high reputation. The result of the year's working had shown a very satisfactory profit. They had also acquired the shares of the company running the Elm Press, a business devoted to the production of a class of printing of which it was anticipated that much would be heard in the future—viz., off-set printing. The character of the work done was seen principally in two of the company's publications—the *Passing Show* and the *Picturegoer*. For the last two years Odhams Press had printed the well-known and old-established Sunday newspaper, *The People*, and two or three months ago they entered into an agreement by which they acquired 79 per cent. of the shares in the new company controlling it. Already, the circulation had very rapidly advanced, and they had good reason to anticipate that this paper would prove one of the most profitable of the company's larger ventures. In conclusion he paid a warm tribute to the indomitable energy of the Managing Director (Mr. Elias) and the members of the staff.

The report was unanimously adopted.

## PULLMAN CAR COMPANY

## IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICES.

THE ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING of the Pullman Car Company, Ltd., was held on the 8th inst., at Winchester House, Old Broad Street, E.C.

Sir Davison Dalziel, Bt., M.P., chairman and managing director, presided, and in moving the adoption of the report and accounts said that the gross earnings and net profits showed increases as compared with the corresponding items in last year's balance-sheet. The business had shown satisfactory developments during the period under review, the returns from both passenger traffic and commissary sales marking an improvement, which emphasized public appreciation of their undertaking. As to why they were paying a dividend of 7½ per cent. on the Ordinary shares as against 10 per cent. paid last year, the necessity for building up the depreciation account had much to do with that decision, and the board had decided that it was in the interests of the company that that policy should be recommended. The charges for maintenance were somewhat higher, being £24,771 as against £22,178. That might be explained by a slight increase in the number of cars working and the desire of the board to see that the rolling-stock was kept in first-class condition. The amount of £35,000 placed to the depreciation account was £15,000 in excess of the reserve for the similar purpose last year, and while that might seem to some of the shareholders a somewhat heavy increase, he felt sure it was a wise policy to create as rapidly as possible a substantial reserve fund under this heading, in spite of the fact that their maintenance expenditure was considered by many as taking the place of a depreciation account, having regard to the fact that the cars were generally kept in a condition of original efficiency. As the balance-sheet now stood all items of a doubtful character had disappeared. Thus, the item of £82,370 standing on the credit side against expenses of the last Preference share issue had been written off. There was no credit taken for goodwill, and apart altogether from the depreciation account, there was capital reserve account which amounted to £178,477 as shown in the balance-sheet.

Sir J. S. Harmood-Banner, Bt., seconded the resolution, and it was unanimously approved after the chairman had replied to some questions.

## EAGLE STAR AND BRITISH DOMINIONS.

## BOARD'S CONSERVATIVE POLICY.

## STRONG RESERVE POSITION.

Presiding at the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Eagle Star and British Dominions Insurance Co., Ltd., held on May 14, at 32 Moorgate, E.C., Sir Edward M. Mountain, Bt., in moving the adoption of the Report and Accounts, said that in their Life Department, including Group Life, 3,980 new policies, assuring £1,810,794, were issued. Of this, only £55,300 was re-assured. The mortality experience of 1924 was well within the expectation, while the profit from the incidence of mortality was substantial. Last year they had been able to declare large bonuses on the quinquennial valuations of the "Star" and "Sceptre" funds. During the period covered by the accounts, as a result of the survey of the "Eagle" and "English and Scottish" funds, their actuaries had advised the payment of interim bonuses largely in excess of those paid in the past. Future bonuses, also were likely to be most gratifying to the policy holders. The sum of £16,581 in respect of the "Sceptre" Fund Valuation as at December 31, 1923, and a further sum of £40,000, being a transfer on account of interim profits from the Company's non-participating Life business, had been carried to the Profit and Loss Account. The shareholders would observe that their Life Department was contributing substantial sums to profit and loss and this was likely to continue in the future.

## THE GROUP INSURANCE POLICY.

A feature of the year's working was the revision of their Group Insurance contract and the introduction of a more comprehensive form of policy which should be of a very real value to all employers who realized that the prosperity of their business was intimately associated with the welfare of their staff. That class of insurance was steadily expanding and they had now on their books representatives of most of the principal trades in the country.

## THE FIRE DEPARTMENT.

Dealing with the Fire Department, he said they had reduced their premium income in the United States and Canada during the past year by approximately £460,000 and in order that certain commitments might be definitely closed, a special sum of £48,383 had been paid as a refund of premium and debited to the past year's accounts. As the result of these adjustments, they had every confidence that their Fire business in U.S.A. and Canada would show a marked improvement in the future. He was pleased to inform them that Mr. R. P. Barbour, who had had long experience of Fire Insurance in America and for many years past had been one of the Assistant Managers of the United States Branch of the North British & Mercantile, had recently been added to their staff of valued representatives in the United States. Their Fire business at home and generally in other parts of the world continued to give satisfactory results and after providing for the special refund of premium referred to, a sum of £14,085 had been transferred to the Profit and Loss Account.

## MARINE DEPARTMENT

The General Insurance Department had yielded a profit of £28,851 and the Marine Department £31,000. Notwithstanding the unsatisfactory conditions prevailing in Marine Insurance, the very conservative policy adopted by the Board during the last five years was justifying itself. The Reserve carried forward last year included provision for losses of cargo due to the Japanese earthquake. All these claims had now been settled, and so their Reserve position was much stronger than it was last year.

There was no doubt, he thought, that sooner or later the Marine section of insurance business would require drastic reorganisation. The great difficulty at the present time was that the market was far too large for the volume of business offered. As he had recently stated, certain pernicious customs had crept into the business and he thought underwriters would in their own interests, do well to deal with the matter resolutely. Action in this direction, in his opinion, should be taken at once if they were to have any improvement in the business.

## STRONG RESERVE POSITION

After providing for the expenses of management, there was left a balance to the credit of the Profit and Loss Account of £60,923, which was subject to the final dividends paid on the 1st January last on account of 1924.

In conclusion, he wished to call attention to the fact that the Departmental and General Reserves held, together with the paid-up capital, now amounted to over 140 per cent. of their premium income and showed an increase during the year of over 15 per cent. The business of the company for 1925 showed an improvement in all branches, and the directors looked to the future with undiminished confidence.

The Report and Accounts were unanimously adopted.



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